A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

ORDINATION

Of the REVEREND

Mr. *THOMAS GIBBONS*,

OCTOBER 27, 1743.

At *Haberdasher's Hall, London.*

By JOHN GUYSE, *D. D.*

Together with an

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE,

By RICHARD RAWLIN.

Mr. GIBBONS's Confession of FAITH,

And an EXHORTATION to Him,

By THOMAS HALL.

Published at the united Request of the Church, and of the Ministers then present.

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Together with an

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LONDON:

INTRODUCTION.

IT is one of the peculiar glories of the Goſpel diſpenſation, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is placed at the head of it, and that every thing that relates to the comfort and advantage of his church and people is placed under his gracious and all-wiſe direction. God *hath given him to be head over all things to the church*, and *all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth:* and as its deareſt intereſts are ever ſafe in his hands; ſo we cannot but look upon it as a ſtanding inſtance of that tender and watchful care which this exalted head of the church exerciſes over it, that in all ages of it he hath given it officers and miniſters, *extraordinary* and *ordinary*, ſuited to its ſtate and exigencies.

In the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, when the Goſpel was to make its way againſt

ſuch ſtrong oppoſition, and had all the luſts and prejudices both of the *Jewiſh* and *Gentile* world to contend with, there were *extraordinary* officers appointed in the church, who were ſuitably fitted and qualified for the then preſent condition and circumſtances of it.

Such were the *Apoſtles*; who being ſent forth by the immediate direction and appointment of Chriſt himſelf, to ſpread Chriſtianity all over the world, and ſet up Goſpel churches wherever they came, and by vertue of their apoſtolick authority preſide over them, were accordingly furniſhed with extraordinary gifts and powers for this purpoſe. Hence we find them placed in the front of thoſe officers, which our Lord upon his aſcenſion gave unto his church. Eph. iv. 8,—11. *Wherefore he ſaith, when he aſcended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he aſcended, what is it but that he alſo deſcended firſt into the lower parts of the earth? He that deſcended, is the ſame alſo that aſcended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave ſome Apoſtles.*—— To theſe were added, *Prophets* and *Evangeliſts*.

Prophets,

Prophets, in thoſe days, were perſons divinely inſpired to interpret Scripture; particularly, as I apprehend, to explain the propheſies of the Old Teſtament, and ſhew how they had their full and proper accompliſhment in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: A Thing ſo neceſſary to be done to convince the *Jews*, and bring them over to the faith of the Goſpel.

Evangeliſts; their character ſeems to be that they were of the nature of aſſiſtants to the Apoſtles in preaching the Goſpel, and ſettling and regulating the new-planted churches, without being confined to any particular place or charge. And as their work was thus extenſive, they likewiſe were furniſhed with extraordinary gifts for it: as ſeems plain from the caution, which the Apoſtle gives *Timothy*, 1 Tim. iv. 14. *not to neglect the gift*, which he had received at his ordination *by the laying on of hands*. Compare 2 Tim. i. 6. *Grotius* *, upon the place, has a pretty conjecture, that *the gift*,

* His words are; *Puto agi hic de dono linguarum; talia Dona ſollicite cuſtodienda ſunt, gratiarum actione, precibus, Sancto uſu.* Nor is it, I think, the leaſt improbable that ſo great a man as *Timothy* was favoured with this gift; and the paſſage before us plainly ſhews, that it was conferred on him by the *laying on of hands* at his ordination. And, indeed, conſidering *Timothy*'s eminent

gift, which the Apoſtle cautions *Timothy not to neglect*, was the gift of Tongues; a gift ſo neceſſary for the propagation of the Goſpel in that day, and which if it was not duely cultivated and improved might probably be in danger of being either ſuſpended,

eminent ſtation and character in the church, that the Apoſtle deſigned him for his companion and aſſiſtant in his future travels and labours in the Goſpel, (Acts xvi. 1, 2, 3.) and that it was to the work and office of an Evangeliſt that he was ordained (ſee 2 Tim. iv. 5.) for which the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were ſo highly proper: I ſay, conſidering theſe things, I cannot help thinking that he then received the gift of Tongues, and perhaps ſome other gifts of the like nature, in a ſuperior degree, even to the power of communicating them to others. And if this were the caſe, this ſeems to give us the true ground and reaſon of that caution, which the Apoſtle gives him, 1 Epiſt. v. 22. ——*to lay hands ſuddenly on no man*; that is, to be very careful how, *by laying on of hands*, he communicated any of theſe extraordinary gifts to others, leſt he ſhould incur the blame of communicating them to perſons, who might make an improper and bad uſe of them: though, I remember, Dr. *Hammond* will not allow that the Apoſtle in this paſſage ſpeaks of the buſineſs of ordination at all, but of the *laying on of hands* in the abſolution of penitents, as what he thinks beſt agrees with the context; and that learned writer has ſhewn, in a large note upon the place, that in the early ages of the church this rite was uſed for that purpoſe.

Upon the whole, ſince the ceaſing of extraordinary gifts, which 'tis certain were conveyed by *laying on of*

pended, or totally loſt and withdrawn. And if this were the caſe, and it is certain extraordinary gifts were conferred in thoſe days by the laying on of hands; the uſe of this rite in this inſtance ſeems to give little countenance to the continuance of it in thoſe ordinations, where 'tis certain no ſuch gifts are conferred.

But

of hands in that day; I can ſee no room for the continuance of it in our preſent ordinations, as I apprehend, neither office-power nor office-gifts are conveyed by it: And, indeed, if our hands are thus empty, and nothing at all is conveyed by them, for what purpoſe ſhould they be laid on?

What makes what I have ſaid above, concerning *Timothy*'s receiving the miraculous and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, at his ordination, in a ſuperior degree, even to the power of communicating them to others, the more probable, is what the Apoſtle has told us, 1 Tim. iv. 14. that they were *given him by propheſy*, διὰ προφητείας; or *according to the propheſies which went before of him*, as it is expreſſed 1 Tim. i. 18. In both which places the Apoſtle plainly refers to ſome *propheſies*, which were handed about at that time, and which probably were delivered by ſome *Prophets* which belonged to the church at *Lyſtra*, (where *Timothy* is ſuppoſed to have been ordained, and of which it is likely he was a member,) concerning that eminency of gifts which he ſhould have conferred on him: nor would there have been any room for ſuch propheſies, had there not been ſomething very remarkable in thoſe gifts, in a day when extraordinary gifts were ſo common.

But as these *officers* were peculiar to the first ages of Christianity, and are long since ceased, with all the miraculous gifts and powers that went a long with them; the great Head and Lord of the church now continues his care of it in giving it *ordinary* Pastors and Teachers, his standing ministers for the carrying on the interests and designs of his grace there. For so it follows in that passage which I have already had occasion to refer to. Eph. iv. 11. *And he gave some, Apostles: and some, Prophets: and some, Evangelists: and some, Pastors and Teachers.*

Pastors were those officers in the church, who were *to feed it*, as shepherds the flock, *with knowledge and understanding*, with sound doctrine and the bread of life; and *to rule over it in the Lord*, by presiding in all the affairs of the church, and seeing that that rule of order and government, which Christ hath erected in his churches, be steadily and inviolably observed and maintained.

Teachers would seem at first view, as they stand in this list of the officers which Christ hath given his church, to bear somewhat the same relation to Pastors, as Evangelists

geliſts did to the Apoſtles, and to be of the nature of aſſiſtants to them in preaching the Goſpel, and who, without any intereſt in the rule and government of the church, might be ſuppoſed eſpecially to attend to that part of miniſterial duty, the miniſtry of the word; and perhaps by a wiſe and ſuitable diſtinction of gifts might be peculiarly furniſhed for it: *He that teacheth, on teaching.*

But without entering into a particular diſcuſſion of the nature of theſe offices; whether they were two diſtinct offices in the primitive church, and if two, wherein the diſtinction between them lay; or whether (as ſome think) they were only one and the ſame office, but deſcribed by two names to ſignify the two diſtinct branches of the Paſtoral office, thoſe of feeding and governing the church: without, I ſay, entering into a particular diſcuſſion of theſe things, about which learned men are ſo much divided; it is ſufficient for our preſent purpoſe to obſerve what our Lord's view was in the inſtitution of them.—— They are *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man,*

unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. They are for the edifying the body of Chriſt, in knowledge, faith, holineſs, and comfort, till we come to the ſtate of perfect men in him.——Till we come to that ſtate and world where, and where only, we ſhall be advanced above the uſe, becauſe above the want of miniſters and ordinances, in a perfection of knowledge, holineſs, and bleſſedneſs for evermore.

What has been now ſaid concerning the ends for which Chriſt gave *Paſtors* to his church, plainly points out the qualifications which are neceſſary to be found in thoſe who are called to this ſacred office. They muſt be ſuch as have an aptneſs and *ability to teach*, and ſkill and wiſdom to manage the affairs of the church according to the rule which Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed in it; that ſo the purity of Goſpel truth, and the beauty of Goſpel worſhip and order, may be maintained, and by both the church be comforted and edified.—— And as I doubt not but that you, who are the members of this church, have had a regard to this in the choice you have lately made of one *to go out, and come in* before you as your Paſtor;—— I would deſire

desire that one of your number would, in the name of the rest, acquaint this Assembly, who are come together to behold your faith and order, and the Pastors and Ministers of other churches, who are present at your desire to assist you with our prayers and best advices, what steps you have taken in order to that settlement which you are now about to perfect.

Which was accordingly done here, by one of the Deacons *of the church.*

As the church has been now representing the steps which they have taken in order to their settlement with a proper person among them in the Pastoral office; I would now desire you, My Brother, whom the providence of God has directed their thoughts to for this purpose, to let us know in what light the call which the church gave you to this office, appeared to you, and what has determined your thoughts in a matter that is confessedly of such importance to you and them.

Which was accordingly done here, by Mr. Gibbons.

I have already obſerved, that the work of *a Paſtor* lies very much in feeding the church committed to his care *with knowledge and underſtanding*: And as this muſt be done by a faithful and diligent preaching the pure and uncorrupted doctrines of the word of God, I would therefore now deſire that you, Sir, who are called to this office in this church, would, in the preſence of God and his people, give a plain and ſummary account of your faith in the ſeveral articles of ſcripture-doctrine; that ſo other churches may with the more ſatisfaction maintain communion with this; and the Miniſters, who are to carry on the farther work of the day in prayer, may with the more freedom and earneſtneſs unite in imploring a bleſſing upon your future miniſtrations.

Here Mr. Gibbons *delivered a confeſſion of his Faith, which is herewith publiſhed.*

It is with great ſatisfaction that we have ſeen the regular ſteps which the church has taken in the call which they gave our Brother before us to the Paſtoral office, with

with the attention and regard which he paid to what ſeemed to him the plain call of God: We have likewiſe with great ſatisfaction ſeen him *witneſſing a good confeſſion before many witneſſes*, in giving ſo ample a teſtimony to the ſoundneſs of his faith in the great and important truths of the Goſpel.——What therefore I have now further to ſay, is only to deſire the church to recognize their call of him to the Paſtoral office by the holding up of the hands of the Brethren; and Him to teſtify his acceptance of it.

Pleaſe therefore, you that are the Brethren of the church, to recognize the churches call of the Reverend Mr. *Gibbons* to the Paſtoral office by the holding up of your hands.

Which was accordingly done.

And you, Sir, pleaſe to teſtify your acceptance of it.

Which was accordingly done.

Having

Having proceeded thus far, the remaining work of the day will be, to unite in solemn prayer to God, that he would attend with his blessing what has been thus transacted; and for the Ministers, who are appointed to those services, to add a word of instruction and exhortation, suitable to the occasion.

A CON-

A

CONFESSION of FAITH

Delivered at his ORDINATION

By THOMAS GIBBONS.

Schemes, or *Collections* of *Doctrines* reduced into an Order, may be of Uſe (as they have always been uſed in the Church in all Ages) more diſtinctly *to inform Others* concerning our Sentiments; provided, they be avowed to be looked upon but as a *Menſura menſurata*, reſerving unto the Scriptures the Honour of being only the *Menſura menſurans*; and ſo that we only own them *as agreeable to the Scriptures*: And that *for the Things* we believe them with *a Degree of Aſſent* proportionable to their *greater* or *leſs Evidence*.

Mr. Howe on the Carnality of Religious Contention.

A

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Scheme, or Collection of Doctrines reduced into an Order, may be of Use (as they have always been used in the Church in all Ages) more distinctly to inform Others concerning our Sentiments; provided, they be avowed to be looked upon but as a Menſura menſurata, referring unto the Scriptures the Honour of being only the Menſura menſurans; and so that we only own them as agreeable to the Scriptures: And that for the Things we believe them with a Degree of Assent proportionable to their Evidence or the Evidence.

Mr. Howe on the Carnality of Religious Conference.

A CONFESSION of FAITH.

AS it is justly expected from me that I should make Confession of those Doctrines which are the real Sentiments of my Heart; and which, as God shall enable me, I intend to maintain and preach to others in the Course of my Ministry, I accordingly do this Day, under an humbling Sense of my own Imperfection, and Liableness to Mistake, and yet with a solemn Appeal to that God, whose Eye searches, and examines into the Depths of my Soul, declare, in the Presence of God, Angels, and Men, that the Doctrines which follow are the Articles of my Belief.

I. I am convinced by the Evidences derived from the Light of Nature, and the great and wonderful Appearances wherewith I am surrounded, that there is One, and One only, Spiritual, Invisible, Eternal, Supreme, Self-existent, and Infinite God. Of Unsearchable Wisdom, Almighty

Power, Absolute Holiness, Inflexible Justice, Inexhaustible Goodness, and Immutable Truth, and Faithfulness. In a Word, that he is the Possessor, and Fountain of all Excellence and Perfection. The vast and magnificent Expansion of the Heavens, with the Sun, Moon, and Stars ordained to move and shine there with constant Harmony and Glory; the mighty Globe of Earth filled with various Kinds, and innumerable Multitudes of Inhabitants; the proper and plentiful Provision made for their Sustenance, and Comfort; the regular and needful, Revolutions of Summer, and Winter, Seed-Time and Harvest; the shorter and grateful Successions of Day and Night; and especially this Chief of Wonders, this Master-Piece of the Creation, *Man*, consisting of a material Body of curious, and excellent Structure, and a Spirit of amazing Powers of Understanding, Will, and Affections; with a Thousand more daily and conspicuous Wonders abundantly proclaim the Eternal Power and Godhead of the great Maker, Preserver, and Proprietor of All.

II. But though the Works of Creation and Providence are Witnesses for the Existence and Perfections of the Deity, yet for a more clear and distinct Knowledge of what God is in Himself, of the chief and impor-

important Articles of Religion, and of the various, and moſt powerful Obligations to Duty, I believe we are indebted to the Light of a Verbal Revelation from God: And to ſuch a Revelation are we obliged for any Knowledge at all of the Operations of the Power and Grace of God in Behalf of fallen Men: And from thence only can Sinners attain ſolid Hopes of divine Forgiveneſs and Acceptance. Such a Revelation has God graciouſly vouchſafed, and is only to be found in the Writings of the Old and New Teſtament.

III. The Purity of the Precepts, the Fulneſs of the Promiſes, the Terror of the Threatnings, and, in a Word, the Spirituality of the Matter contained in the Bible; the Conſideration alſo of the Characters of the inſpired Penmen; the punctual Accompliſhment of Propheſies in general, and of thoſe in particular which relate to the Coming of the Meſſiah, and the preſent State of the Jews; together with the ſtrong and invincible Evidence of Miracles, and the Preſervation of the ſacred Volumes through the Rage and Flames of Perſecution ſafe to theſe later Ages, prove to me that the two Parts of Scripture, the Old and New Teſtament, are two Tables, containing the divine Mind and Will, engraven by the divine Finger, and given us from God Himſelf.

IV. The

IV. The Scripture, as it appears ſurrounded with all thoſe Proofs, and Atteſtations of having God for its Author, ought to have the moſt holy Reverence paid it, and an equal Regard ſhewn to both its Parts. Scripture I eſteem the Standard, and Directory of my Faith, and Practice. All Doctrine and Precept which are not drawn from this pure Fountain, or that will not bear the Examination of this divine Light, I deſire at once to relinquiſh and reject; but whatſoever, reſpecting either Belief or Duty, is written in this ſacred Pages, I deſire may be tranſcribed into my Heart, and Soul; ever remembering what is the cloſing Thunder of the Book of God. *If any Man ſhall take away from the Words of the Book of this Prophecy, God ſhall take away his Part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy City, and from the Things which are written in this Book.**

V. The following Doctrines therefore, which, after frequent, and diligent Reading and Searches, in a Dependance upon Illumination and Guidance from above, I cannot but conclude are the genuine Truths of Scripture, I can readily ſubſcribe as the Articles of my Faith, and pray that I may more and more experience them as the conſtant

* Rev. xxii. 19.

constant and living Springs of my Holiness, and Comfort.

VI. I believe there are Three who bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Each of the Three having Personal Characters and Appellations ascribed to them in Scripture, may therefore with Propriety be called Persons, but yet as Reason and Scripture assure me there is but One God, I believe that the Three Persons are One God, equal in Power, and Glory. The Imperfection of a Creature, and especially of Man, a lower and sinful Creature, may not be able to conceive the Manner how Three Persons should be One God, but so long as the divine Attributes of Eternity, and Immensity are universally believed, notwithstanding they have Breadths, and Depths in them never to be comprehended and fathomed by our shallow and finite Capacities, I see no Reason why the Doctrine of the Trinity, the clear and frequent Revelation of Scripture, should be rejected, which appears to have no harder Objections lying against it.

VII. I learn from Scripture that all Things are foreseen, and foreordained by God, and that no Event ever takes Place in the Natural or Moral World in all the Ages of Time and Eternity, but what was from Ever-

Everlasting the Object of the divine Foresight, and the Matter of the divine Decree. I believe from the Testimony of Scripture, that God has chosen in Christ a certain Number of Mankind to be Heirs of everlasting Glory without any Regard to their future Faith and Obedience as Causes exciting him thereto: And that he has determined to suffer the Rest, who are not included in the Election of Grace, to be the awful Monuments of his Wrath, and Vengeance, as the just Consequence, and Desert of their own Sin. * *We are bound to give Thanks always to God for you, Brethren, Beloved of the Lord; because God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation through Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth.* † *What if God, willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much Long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath, fitted to Destruction?*

VIII. It pleased God in the Beginning by the Word of his Power to call forth the Creation from Nothing: Then was it that the Arches of the Heavens were raised; then did the Earth arise into Being, and its mighty Globe was hung upon Nothing; which, though at first a rude and desolate Chaos, yet afterwards was made a fair and beautiful Frame, a wide, and glorious Theatre

* 2 Thes. ii. 13. † Rom. ix. 22.

tre fit for the Display of the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of the Creator. And therefore the great Maker upon the Survey of the Works of his Hands pronounced them good. * *And God saw every Thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.*

IX. Amongst the rest of the Creatures, and at the Head of this lower World, God created Man; his Body was taken and fashioned out of the Ground, yet without any Seeds of Corruption, and Mortality mingled with it. But he became a living, a reasonable, and immortal Soul by God's *breathing into him of the Breath of Life.* † And as his Soul was given him by the Breath of the Almighty, so it had the Image of its holy and divine Author upon it. The Understanding was Light, the Will Rectitude, and the Affections subordinate, harmonious, and perfectly holy. In a Word, nothing was there in Man unworthy of God either to confer, or approve. I believe that Man had the Law of God written in his Heart, and superadded to it, received a divine Command not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good, and Evil, and upon his conforming Himself to, or his Violation of it, depended his Banishment from the

* Gen. i. 31. † Gen. ii. 7.

the Presence, and Favour, or the Communion, and Enjoyment of his God.

X. I believe that as *Adam* was the Root, so he was the Representative of all Mankind, and that the Consequences of his Obedience or Disobedience during his Time of Trial were to extend through all his Posterity: As therefore by his Apostacy he brought Himself under the divine Condemnation, lost his primitive, and original Righteousness, and introduced universal Corruption and Depravity over the Powers of his Soul, so we his wretched Descendants are shapen in Iniquity, and conceived in Sin, are born Heirs of Wrath, and Children of Disobedience.

XI. Man having put Himself out of Capacity of obtaining Life and Happiness by the Covenant of Works, God was pleased to reveal a Covenant of Grace made before the World began with the Lord Jesus as the fœderal Head of his People, wherein free Pardon and Salvation are proclaimed thro' Faith in his Blood, and the powerful and regenerating Influences of the Holy Spirit are promised to such as are the Vessels chosen to Glory, by which they are enabled savingly to believe and give themselves up to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant never to be forgotten; the Lord engaging

to

to be their God, and they to become his People. *

XII. I believe, according to Eternal Covenant between the Father, and Himſelf, that the Son of God, the Second Perſon in the Ever-bleſſed Trinity, when the Fulneſs of Time for his Incarnation was come, took upon him the Human Nature under its many and painful Infirmities, Sin only excepted; ſo that two Natures are united in the Perſon of Chriſt; and hence He becomes an able and ſuitable Mediator to reconcile between God, the offended Majeſty of Heaven, and Man, the guilty Offender and Rebel againſt his Laws and Government.

XIII. I am taught from Scripture that Chriſt, as he was made under, ſo he magnified, and made honourable the holy Law we had broken by a Life of ſinleſs, and perfect Obedience; that he endured in our Room the Puniſhment due to our Sins, and that Juſtice has at the Hands of the Surety received a full Satisfaction; ſo that upon cloſing with Chriſt the Sinner is actually pardoned, diſcharged from Guilt, reconciled to God, and has a Title given him to everlaſting Life and Glory.

XIV. I believe that Chriſt died, was buried, roſe again, aſcended into Heaven,

* Jer. l. 5.

and is now interceding at the Throne above for the Application, to all ſuch whom the Father has given him, of all thoſe Bleſſings which were the Purchaſe of his Obedience and Sufferings.

XV. I believe that all ſuch who are predeſtinated to Eternal Life, by the Operations of the Holy Ghoſt, are effectually called out of a Death of Sin to the Life of Holineſs: That their Underſtandings are enlightened, their Wills renewed, their Affections ſpiritualized; and, in a Word, that ſo great a Change takes Place upon them by the Power of the Holy Spirit, that they, who were ſunk in Earthly-mindedneſs and Carnality, and were deſcribed as nothing better than Fleſh, are quickened, and reſtored to a Newneſs and Spirituality of Life, and are ſaid, ſo great is the Change that paſſes upon them, *to be born Spirit of the Spirit.* *

XVI. I believe that whoſoever are effectually called are juſtified, and that not by any Works or Obedience of their own, but only for the Sake of the Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt; which Righteouſneſs is made over to, and received by us upon our Believing, and Acceptance of him.

XVII. I believe that all who are juſtified are adopted into the Family of Heaven: Leaving the Dominion of the Prince of

* Joh. iii. 6.

of Darkneſs, they enter into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God: They are no longer Foreigners and Strangers, but become Fellow-Citizens of the New *Jeruſalem*; and have no leſs honourable, and glorious Appellations *than Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Chriſt.* *

XVIII. I believe that they who are adopted are ſanctified. The Spirit of Holineſs and Power, who has begun the good Work, continues his Influences to maintain and promote it: The Old Man is Day by Day mortifying, and decaying; the New Man Day by Day ſtrengthening and renewing: And thus, as the Foundation of Holineſs was laid at effectual Calling, the Superſtructure is by Degrees riſing and advancing in our Sanctification, till at length Believers grow up into an holy Temple in the Lord.

XIX. Saving Faith is a Grace, not of our own Production, but wrought in us by the Influence of the Holy Spirit. It not only includes an Aſſent to the Doctrines revealed in the Goſpel, and particularly to this fundamental Truth, *that Chriſt the Son of God is the Sacrifice and Atonement for Sin*; but by Faith we make Choice of him, and upon him build our Eternal Hopes of Forgiveneſs and Acceptance with God.

* Rom. viii. 17.

XX. Repentance is a Grace implanted in us by the Power of the Spirit of God, whereby, after we have had the Eye of our Underſtandings divinely enlightened to behold our Iniquities in their Demerit, Numbers, and Aggravations, we with hearty and painful Shame and Abhorrence determine no longer to live in the Practice and Indulgence of them, but, as divine Grace ſhall enable us, to be *denying all Ungodlineſs, and worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in the preſent evil World*; * *to cleanſe ourſelves from the Pollutions of Fleſh, and Spirit, and perfect Holineſs in the Fear of God.* †

XXI. Though our good Works are utterly inſufficient to obtain Salvation for us, and are to bear no Part in our Juſtification, yet whereſoever that Faith, which is of the Operation of God, has taken Root in the Soul, it will be productive and abundant in the Fruits of Righteouſneſs. *By good Works*, they are the Words of the Aſſemblies Confeſſion in which I heartily agree, *Believers manifeſt their Thankfulneſs, ſtrengthen their Aſſurance, edify their Brethren, adorn the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, ſtop the Mouths of Adverſaries, and glorify God, whoſe Workmanſhip they are ordained thereunto, that having their Fruit unto Holineſs they*

* Tit. ii. 12. † 2 Cor. vii. 1.

they may have the End Eternal Life. So that we may make the ſame Demand, and return the ſame Anſwer with the Apoſtle, * *Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid: Yea, we eſtabliſh the Law.* The Tables of the Moral Law are ſupported, and not broken by the Croſs of Chriſt.

XXII. I believe that in whomſoever *God has begun the good Work he will perform it until the Day of Jeſus Chriſt*; † *and that the Path of the Juſt is as the Morning Light, which ſhines more and more unto a perfect Day.* § The Love, the Promiſe, the Honour of Chriſt, together with the intimate and vital Union which He has obtained between Himſelf, and People, confirm my Belief of this comfortable Truth. Nor can I queſtion but the Seal of God's Covenant has *Everlaſting* for its Inſcription, ſince it is expreſsly called, *an Everlaſting Covenant, ordered in all Things, and ſure.* ‡

XXIII. I believe from the Progreſs and Improvement of Sanctification, and from the Light, and Evidence the Spirit of God ſpreads over his own Work in the Soul, a joyful Aſſurance may be derived by the People of God of their final Salvation and Glory.

* Rom. iii. 31. † Phil. i. 6. § Prov. iv. 18.
‡ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Glory. * *For we know that if our earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle was diſſolved, we have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens.* But by no means would I affirm that Aſſurance is of the Eſſence of Faith, or that none are true Believers, but ſuch as are aſſured of preſent Grace, and future Glory; ſince it is ſaid in another Part of Scripture; *In whom alſo, after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with the Holy Spirit of Promiſe.* †

XXIV. I believe that all ſuch, whereſoever they are diſperſed abroad in the World, whoſe Faith and Practice are conformable to the Goſpel of Chriſt, are the Catholic Church of Chriſt; and that He, and He only is the Head of it: So that whoſoever exalts Himſelf, and preſumes to take Part in the Dominion with him, is no other than an Anti-Chriſt, intrenching upon the divine Prerogative, and lording, and uſurping over God's Heritage.

XXV. A ſelect Number of Chriſtians uniting, and engaging to walk together in all the Commandments, and Ordinances of the Lord, to ſtrengthen each other's Hands, to bear each other's Burdens, and promote each other's ſpiritual Intereſts, are, under the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, a Church of Chriſt: And for the Perfecting of the Saints, for the Work

* 2 Cor. v. 1. † Eph. i. 13.

Work of the Miniſtry, and for the Edifying of the Body of Chriſt, I believe Chriſt has appointed Paſtors, and Teachers to preach the Word, to be inſtant in Seaſon, and out of Seaſon, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all Long-ſuffering, and Doctrine. And as one neceſſary and eſſential Branch of a Paſtor's Duty, he is to adminiſter the two Sacraments which Chriſt has ordained to be obſerved in his Churches to the End of the World, I mean Baptiſm, and the Lord's-Supper.

XXVI. Baptiſm is an Ordinance appointed by Chriſt, wherein by the external Waſhing of Water in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, is ſignified our Admiſſion into the viſible Church, the Purging of our Conſciences from dead Works by the Blood of Jeſus, and the Renovation of our Natures by the Influences of the Holy Spirit, which, as pure Waters the Body, ſanctify, and cleanſe the Soul. And ſince the Old Teſtament Diſpenſation cannot be thought to include a greater Extent of Privilege than that of the Goſpel, I believe that the Infants of Believing Parents are proper and appointed Subjects of Baptiſm. And it is evident that the Promiſe reached as far after, as before Chriſt's Coming in the Fleſh, ſince it is expreſsly

expreſsly ſaid; * *The Promiſe is unto you, and to your Children.*

XXVII. The Lord's-Supper is a Sacrament ordained by Chriſt to keep alive the Believer's grateful, and affectionate Remembrance of the Obedience, and Sufferings of his Lord. The Breaking of Bread is a proper and lively Repreſentation of his Body wounded, and crucified for us. And the Pouring out of Wine excites our joyful Commemoration of our ſuffering, and dying Saviour, who, that we might eſcape Eternal Condemnation, and Death, might be diſcharged from Guilt, and be advanced to a ſpiritual, and glorious Life, and Immortality, offered Himſelf up as a bleeding Sacrifice for our Sins. Thus recognizing the Love of their Saviour, Believers cheriſh, and increaſe their own Faith, Hope, and Joy in Him; and by every freſh Repetition of their Duty, they lay Themſelves under a voluntary Bond, and Obligation to new and perpetual Obedience.

XXVIII. I believe that at Death our Bodies ſhall return to the Duſt whence they were taken, and there ſee Corruption; but that our Souls, when the Veil of Fleſh is rent, ſhall aſcend to God who gave them; ſhall have an immediate and unalterable Sentence to Eternal Life or Death pronounced

* Acts ii. 39.

hounced upon them, and accordingly be admitted into the Paradiſe of God, or ſent down to be tormented with the Devil, and his Angels.

XXIX. Scripture aſſures me that God has appointed a Day wherein he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs by Jeſus Chriſt: At that awful delightful Period, at preſent locked up in the divine Counſels, but 'ere long to take Place in full Accompliſhment, the Sun ſhall be covered with Darkneſs, the Moon turned into Blood, the Stars of Heaven ſhall fall, the Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat; this viſible Firmament of Heaven ſhall open, roll up, and paſs away with a great Noiſe: The Judge ſhall deſcend on his Throne, arrayed with unutterable Majeſty and Glory: Myriads of the Angelic Hoſts ſhall accompany their God, and be the Heralds to prepare his Way. The awful Trumpet ſhall be blown; its Alarm ſhall penetrate, and ſound through all the Caverns of the Earth, and to the Depths and Bottoms of the Sea; thence ſhall awaken all the Millions of the Dead, ſome of whom were for long Thouſands of Years entombed, and engulphed beneath. Bone ſhall come to its Bone, Fleſh to its Fleſh, each particular Soul know and rejoin its former Body. The Judgment ſhall be ſet; the Books opened; Righteous and

Wicked ſhall be gathered and ſtand before the divine Tribunal. *Depart ye Curſed* ſhall be the Doom uttered, in Sounds more terrible than thoſe of Thunder, to the Ungodly and Sinners. *Welcome ye Bleſſed of my Father into my Arms, and Glory*, ſhall be the gentle Voice of the Saviour to his Saints. Hell's unfathomable Abyſs ſhall be opened in Smoke, and Darkneſs, Sulphur, and Flame; at once ſhall the whole World of the Wicked be driven, and ſwallowed up in it. The unpaſſable Gulph ſhall be fixed; Hell's Mouth ſhall again be cloſed, and cloſed for ever. The Saints with joyful united Hallelujah's, and Hoſanna's upon their Harps, and Tongues, ſhall return in triumphant Proceſſion with their dear Redeemer to the Heaven of Heavens; and *inſtead of being involved in a like Ruin, ſhall be enrolled amongſt the Inhabitants, and Citizens of the New Jeruſalem, and triumph together with them in Eternal Glory.*

THE

THE SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

ORDINATION

Of the REVEREND

Mr. *THOMAS GIBBONS*,

By JOHN GUYSE, *D. D.*

PHIL. i. 9, 10, 11.

And this I pray, that your Love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge, and in all Judgment; that ye may approve Things that are excellent; that ye may be ſincere, and without Offence till the Day of Chriſt; being filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the Glory and Praiſe of God.

AS Prayer is a great Part of the Work and Duty of this Day; that excellent one, contain'd in theſe Words, is the beſt Directory, that I know of, for the preſent ſolemn Occaſion: It leads our Thoughts to a Cluſter of the moſt deſirable and important Bleſſings, that are to be continually ſought, and purſued with Vigour, in the Uſe of all proper Means, by every Chriſtian, and every Church of Chriſt; and is the great Apoſtle's Prayer for the Church at *Philippi*, together with its *Biſhops and Deacons*, as appears from Ver. 1.

Biſhops

Biſhops or *Overſeers*, as the Word (επισκοποις) ſignifies, is, in Scripture-Uſe, of the ſame Import with *Paſtors* or *Elders*, as is evident, among other Places, from Acts xx. 17, 28; where we are told that the Apoſtle, having called together *the Elders of the Church at* Epheſus, ſaid to them, *Take heed unto yourſelves, and to all the Flock*, (this, in Alluſion to the Office of a *Shepherd*, carries the Idea of a Paſtoral Care of the Church) *over which* (ſays the Apoſtle) *the Holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeers*, (which is the very ſame Word, that in *Philip.* i. 1. and ſeveral other Places, our Tranſlators have rendered *Biſhops*) *to feed the Church of God*; where we have a further Reference to Paſtoral Work, whether we take it with relation to their *feeding the People of God with Knowledge and Underſtanding*, as *Paſtors according to his own Heart*,* which he promiſed to give them; or take it, as the Word (ποιμαινειν) is likewiſe ſometimes uſed, and is tranſlated, Mat. ii. 6. Rev. ii. 27. and xix. 15. for *ruling* or *governing the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own Blood.*

Theſe Elders or Biſhops were the Paſtors of particular Churches, as that was at *Epheſus*, and as thoſe were, of which it is ſaid, that

* Jer. iii. 15.

that the Apoſtles *ordained Elders in every Church*;* and we often find, that theſe Terms, *Elders* and *Biſhops*, were promiſcuouſly uſed one for the other; and that their Qualifications, Work and Office were the ſame; as particularly, when the Apoſtle was deſcribing the Character of thoſe *Elders*, that *Titus* was to ordain in every City, he tells him, *they were to be blameleſs*; and to enforce it adds, *For a Biſhop muſt be blameleſs*; which plainly ſhews, that by an *Elder* and a *Biſhop* he meant the very ſame Thing, otherwiſe there could be no Force in the Argument, that an *Elder* ſhould be blameleſs, becauſe a *Biſhop* muſt be ſo, eſpecially if the laſt were a *ſuperior Order* to the firſt. And the Apoſtle *Peter* exhorted the *Elders* of the Churches, to which he wrote, *to feed the Flock of God, taking the Overſight thereof*, † (επισκοπουντες) which, according to the Genius of our Tranſlation, ſhould have been rendered *biſhoping*, or performing the Office of a *Biſhop* in it; only this would too apparently have led the *Engliſh* Reader to apprehend, that all the *Biſhop*'s Work was to be fulfilled by the *Elders*.

However, in the Church at *Philippi*, and in that at *Epheſus*, there were more than one, who are ſpoken of under the Title of Biſhops, in each of them. And great Pains have

* Acts xiv. 23. † 1 Pet. v. 1, 2.

have been taken, upon the moſt uncertain Conjectures, by the Learned Dr. *Hammond*, * and others, to find out a Collection of the Dioceſan Biſhops of the Proconſular *Aſia*, at *Epheſus*; and a Metropolitan, with his Dioceſans of *Macedonia*, at *Philippi*: But as I can find no Metropolitans, or Dioceſans in the *New Teſtament*; ſo, were there any ſuch in *Aſia*, it is ſcarcely to be thought, that there was Time enough for calling them together to meet the Apoſtle *Paul*, who on a ſudden ſent for the Elders of *Epheſus* to come to him at *Miletus*, when he was only paſſing by *in Haſte* on his Journey to *Jeruſalem*, as appears from Acts xx. 16, 17. And his *ſending to Epheſus, and calling the Elders of the Church*, plainly intimates, that it is meant of the Elders of that Church only.

As to *Philippi*, the Current of Antiquity runs againſt its being the *Metropolis* of *Macedonia*; but gives that Dignity to *Theſſalonica*. † And it is very evident from the

* See his Note on *Philip.* i. 1. † Dr. *Whitby*, in his Note on this Place, has ſhewn, with abundant Evidence, that *Theſſalonica* was the Metropolis of *Macedonia*; and that when *Philippi* is called (as our Tranſlation has it, Act. xvi. 12.) the *Chief City of that Part of Macedonia* (πρωτη της μεριδος της Μακεδονιας πολις) the Meaning is not, that it was the *Chief City* of the *Province*, but *the firſt City of that Part of Macedonia*, which they, that came from *Thrace* thither, touched at. And we may add, that *Philippi*'s being called a *Colony* (Act. xvi. 12.) is far from proving it to have been the Metropolis of *Macedonia*, or of any

the Inſcription of this Epiſtle, that it was wrote to the *Biſhops and Deacons*, as well as to the *Saints in Chriſt Jeſus* that ordinarily reſided at *Philippi*. Accordingly Dr. *Whitby* owns, that by the Biſhops at *Philippi* are meant the *Preſbyters* there; tho' he diſtinguiſheth them from their *proper* Biſhop, which he ſuppoſes was *Epaphroditus*.

Upon the whole, it ſeems to me to be moſt eaſy and natural to ſuppoſe, either that, ſome urgent Circumſtances requiring it, there were Joint-Paſtors of equal *Degree*, as well as *Order*, in one and the ſame Church; or that ſuch *ſtated Aſſiſtants*, as were *equal* with the Paſtor in *Order*, tho' not in *Degree*, and ſo had Power, with the Paſtor's Conſent, or in his Abſence, to perform all the Duties of his Function, are here included under the Term *Biſhops*: And I confeſs I rather incline to the laſt of theſe Opinions; becauſe I think it appears pretty plain from the earlieſt Writers after the Apoſtles, ſuch as *Clemens Romanus*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, and *Juſtin Martyr*, and after them *Cyprian*, * and others, that there were

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any one Province of it, as Dr. *Hammond* would have it: For it ſeems very fanciful to imagine, that every *Colony* muſt needs be a *Metropolis*; ſince in ſome Provinces there were *many* Colonies. Vid. Strab. Geogr. Lib. 5. p. 216, 217. Lut. Par. 1620.

* *Clemens Romanus* indeed ſpeaks of more Biſhops than one in a Church, which I take to be meant in the laxer Senſe;

only *two* different *Orders* of Church-Officers, viz. *Biſhops* or *Paſtors*, and *Deacons*; and that there was, ſtrictly ſpeaking, only *one* Biſhop or Paſtor to a Church or Congregation, which met together in one Place for the Worſhip of God; and but one Church to a Biſhop. From hence alſo it appears, that if either of thoſe Writers at any Time mention Preſbyters with, and in Diſtinction from, Biſhops, it is to be underſtood of *ſuch Sort* of Aſſiſtants: And theſe might be the more needful for the Churches at the firſt Plantation of the Goſpel in

Senſe; becauſe he often uſes the Terms, *Biſhops* and *Preſbyters* or *Elders* promiſcuouſly, as of the ſame Import; and mentions only *two Orders*, viz. *Biſhops* and *Deacons*, as conſtituted by the Apoſtles. Κατα χωρας ουν και πολεις κηρυσσοντες, καθιστανον τας απαρχας αυτων, δοκιμασαντες τω πνευματι, εις επισκοπους και διακονους των μελλοντων πιστευειν. και τουτο ου καινως, εκ γαρ δη πολλων χρονων εγεγραπτο περι επισκοπων και διακονων. κ. λ. —— Και οι αποστολοι ημων εγνωσαν δια του κυριου ημων Ιησου Χριστου οτι εριδος εσται επι του ονοματος της επισκοπης· δια ταυτην ουν την αιτιαν προεγνωσιν ειληφοτες τελειαν, κατεστησαν τους προειρημενους, και μεταξυ επινομην δεδωκασιν, οπως εαν κοιμηθωσιν, διαδεξωνται ετεροι δεδοκιμασμενοι ανδρες την λειτουργιαν αυτων. —— υποτασσεσθε τοις πρεσβυτεροις. *Clem. Rom.* Epiſt. 1. ad Corinth. § 42. 44. 57. apud *Coteler.* Patr. Apoſt. pag. 170. 171. 178. vol. 1. Accordingly *Polycarp* ſpeaks of *Preſbyters* and *Deacons*, as the two Sorts of Officers that were to be ſubmitted to. Υποτασσομενους τοις πρεσβυτεροις και διακονοις. Epiſt. ad Philip. pag. 18. 4^to^. *Oxon.* 1644.

The other ancient Writers above mentioned aſſure us, that there was but one Biſhop to a Church, that met together in one Place for Worſhip and Communion, and one ſuch Church to a Biſhop. Οπου δε ο ποιμην εστιν, εκει ως προβατα ακολουθειτε —— οσοι γαρ Χριστου εισιν, ουτοι μετα του επισκοπου εισιν

in the Apoſtle's Days; becauſe either they, or the Paſtors were obliged, on one Occaſion or other, to attend the Apoſtles, or go on Meſſages to or from them; as *Epaphroditus* did, who went to the Apoſtle *Paul* with the Church's Benevolence, and was ſome Time with him, Chap. ii. 25. and iv. 18. and who, as ſome think with Dr. *Whitby*, was the proper Paſtor of the Church at *Philippi*; tho' how juſtly may admit of Debate.

But, be this as it will, this Church at *Philippi* was compleatly organized, as having its Biſhops and Deacons; and they were

εισιν—Μια γαρ σαρξ τυ Κυριυ ημων Ιησυ Χριστυ—και εν ποτηριον—εν θυσιαστηριον, και εις επισκοπον αμα τω πρεσβυτεριω, και τοις διακονοις. *Ignat.* Epiſt. ad Philad. pag. 93, 96. ibid. Και τη τυ ηλιυ λεγομενη ημερα παντων κατα πολεις η αγρους μενοντων επι το αυτο συνελευσις γινεται, προεδρυ δια λοιπ την νεθεσιαν — ποιειται — και, ως προεφημεν, παυσαμενων ημων της ευχης, αρτος προσφερεται και οινος και υδωρ· και ο προεδρος ευχας ομοιως και ευχαριστιας οση δυναμις αυτω αναπεμπει. κ. λ. Juſt. Martyr. Apol. 2. pag. 98. Paris 1630.

Cyprian in his Account of this Matter ſays, Aliud altare conſtitui, aut ſacerdotium novum fieri, præter unum altare & unum ſacerdotium, non poteſt. Epiſt. 43. p. 229. Edit. 3. a Joh. Fell. Amſtelod. 1700. ——— and ſpeaking of *Cornelius*, as rightful Biſhop of *Rome*, he ſays, Cum poſt primum ſecundus eſſe non poſſit, quiſquis poſt unum, qui ſolus eſſe debeat, factus eſt; non jam ſecundus ille, ſed nullus eſt. Ibid. Epiſt. 55. p. 243. —— Speaking of Biſhops, ordained by *Novatus*, he ſays, Cumque jampridem per omnes provincias, & per urbes ſingulas ordinati ſint Epiſcopi in ætate antiquo — ille ſuper eos creare alios pſeudoepiſcopos audeat. Ibid. pag. 249. and at another Time. Neque enim aliunde hæreſes obortæ ſunt, aut nata ſunt ſchiſmata, quam inde, quod ſacerdos Dei non obtemperatur, nec unus in Eccleſia ad tempus —— cogitatur. Ibid. Epiſt. 59. pag. 261.

a Church exceeding dear to the Apoſtle *Paul*, who ſent his *affectionate Salutations* to them; *bleſſed God for them*; and had great *Confidence, that he, who had begun the good Work in them*, (as the Apoſtle, in the Judgment of Charity, believed concerning them all,) *would perform it until the Day of Jeſus Chriſt*: And he could appeal to God, that he *greatly longed after them all in the Bowels of Jeſus Chriſt*, or with the moſt vehement and tender Affection to them, as Perſons, whom Chriſt loved; and with a Fervour of Soul, in his touching Concern for their ſpiritual Proſperity, which reſembled Chriſt's own compaſſionate and ardent Love to them. An Account of theſe Things you have Ver. 2. —— 8. And it was from this his abundant Affection toward them, that he poured out his Heart for them, in that admirable Addreſs to God in our Text, ſaying, *And this I pray, that your Love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge, and in all Judgment, that ye may approve Things that are excellent; that ye may be ſincere, and without Offence till the Day of Chriſt; being filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the Glory and Praiſe of God.*

This Prayer may, perhaps, be fitly enough divided into *two principal* Petitions: One is, *That their Love might abound in Knowledge*

Knowledge and in all Judgment, (εις το δοκιμαζειν) *unto their approving Things that are excellent,* as it may be rendered; and ſo their *Love's abounding in Knowledge and in all Judgment* may be conſidered, as having a Tendency and Influence unto *their approving the Things, that are excellent*: And its *abounding yet more and more* may be conſidered, as expreſſive of the *Degree*, unto which the Apoſtle deſired it might abound, even unto the *approving Things, that are excellent*. The other Petition is, that they *might be ſincere, and without Offence till the Day of Chriſt; being filled with Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the Glory and Praiſe of God*; and ſo their being *ſincere, and without Offence*, may be conſidered, as manifeſted and exemplified in their being *filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs*, &c.

Or elſe, we may take the whole Prayer, as conſiſting of *four* diſtinct Petitions; one of which naturally leads on, in an orderly Gradation, to the other, and which all together make up the Apoſtle's Requeſts for ſuch deſirable Bleſſings, as enrich, and put a beautiful Ornament upon the Perſons and Churches, that are favoured with them. Or we may conſider the *three laſt*, as expreſſive of the noble Ends, for which he prayed for the *firſt*; ſo that if their Love did

did but abound in Knowledge and in all Judgment, *that* would bring on all the reſt.

But, in which ever of theſe Lights we take the Connection of their Parts, they exhibit ſuch excellent and important Bleſſings, as demand the Aim and Purſuit, Deſire and Prayer of every Chriſtian, and of every Goſpel-Church, for themſelves and others: And it is with this View, that I now propoſe, by divine Aſſiſtance, to recommend them to our ſerious Regards, and particularly to this Church of Chriſt, and to every Member of it. Let it therefore be your earneſt Concern and Prayer,

I. *That your Love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge, and in all Judgment.*

With Reſpect to this, we may briefly obſerve the *four* following Things.

1. The Love, which you ſhould be aſpiring after, is *Chriſtian* Love.

It is ſuch as proceeds from *Faith, which works by Love,* * and hath for its Objects God and Chriſt, his Cauſe and Intereſt, his Truths, Ordinances and Ways, his People and Servants, together with all your Fellow-Creatures, for his Sake. Love to all theſe ſhould be cordial and fervent, and ſhould diſcover itſelf in every proper Operation, Fruit and Effect: As particularly, in your Eſteem

* Gal. v. 6.

Eſteem and Choice of Chriſt for your Head and Saviour, Prophet, Prieſt and King, and of God in him for your Covenant God and Father; in your Deſires after him, Delight in him, Devotedneſs to him, and Zeal for his Glory; in a firm Adherence to the great Doctrines of the Chriſtian-Revelation; in a correſpondent Walk before God in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs, and according to the Order of the Goſpel; and in a kind benevolent Temper and Behaviour towards *all Men, and eſpecially toward them, who are of the Houſhold of Faith.* * This is that *Love*, which every Way becomes the Chriſtian Character, and *is the fulfilling of the Law:* † This inſpires the Soul with a chearful Diſpoſition for, and Activity in *keeping God's Commandments*, § without counting them *grievous:* And this ſhould be particularly expreſſed among yourſelves, in the moſt affectionate Manner, towards *each other*, and toward your reverend *Paſtor*, who is now ſet over you in the Lord.

In your Temper and Conduct towards *each other*, See that ye *be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly Love, in Honour preferring one another:* ‖ Let the *Strong bear the Infirmities of the Weak* among you; *and every one of you ſeek to pleaſe his Neighbour*

* Gal. vi. 10. † Rom. xiii. 10. § 1 Joh. v. 3.
‖ Rom. xii. 10.

bour for his Good to Edification: * And remember, that ye are called to walk together with *all Lowliness and Meekness, with Long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love, endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*; and to *speak the Truth in Love, that ye may grow up into him in all Things, who is the Head, even Christ.* †

And as to your Regards to your worthy *Pastor*, Let *none of you despise his Youth*; but every one *esteem him very highly in Love, for his Work's Sake*; *and be at Peace among yourselves.* § See to it that your Hearts unite in him; that you study his Comfort, and do all that in you lieth to strengthen his Hands, and to encourage him in his Work; and that ye shew forth your Love to him, by an harmonious Spirit among yourselves; by earnestly praying for him; by statedly and diligently attending his Ministry; by receiving the Instructions and Admonitions, which he, from Time to Time, may deliver to you in the Name of Christ, and according to his Will; by submitting to him in the Lord; and by supporting his Reputation and Usefulness, and honourably providing such a Maintenance for him, as may free him from the Cares and Incumbrances

* Rom. xv. 1, 2. † Eph. iv. 2, 3, 15.
§ 1 Thes. v. 13.

brances of this World; may raiſe his Circumſtances above Contempt; and ſet him at Liberty for attending wholly to his ſacred Charge, and employing all his Gifts and Graces, his Thoughts, Time, Strength and Labours, in the Service of Chriſt, and of your Souls. But

2. Your being *Church-Members* ſuppoſes, that you are *already* Partakers of this Grace of Love, in ſome *prevailing* Degree.

The Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Church at *Philippi* as *Saints in Chriſt Jeſus*, concerning whom he had Confidence, that God *had begun his good Work in them.** And his Prayer, that they might *abound* in Love *yet more and more*, plainly intimates, that he looked upon them, as *already* Partakers of that Chriſtian Grace, and as arrived at ſome *conſiderable Advances* in it: And this indeed they had manifeſted in the Teſtimony they had given of their great Love to himſelf, for Chriſt's and the Goſpel's Sake; in as much as they had ſhewn a moſt affectionate Care and Concern for him, and had contributed, with great Cheerfulneſs and Liberality, for a comfortable Supply of his Wants; which he takes Notice of with Abundance of Gratitude and Pleaſure, Chap. iv. 10.—18.

* Ver. 2, 6.

And *your* Character, beloved in the Lord, as *Chriſtians* and *Church-Members*, ſuppoſes, that *you* are not Strangers to this excellent Grace, but that your Hearts are already ſeaſoned with it; your Holy Profeſſion practically declares this, as well as ſtrongly obliges you to it; and, in the Judgment of Charity, it is to be preſumed, that you are, in Reality and Truth, what you profeſs to be: *It is meet for me*, as the Apoſtle ſaid of the *Philippians*, *to think this of you all.** Perſons, that have nothing of this, ought not to be Church-Members: For Love is the great Band of Union and Communion, in that ſpiritual Relation. But you, as a Church, have given evident Proof, not only that you are poſſeſſed of this Grace, but that it hath a conſiderable Degree of Prevalence among you: The Praiſes of your Love to your former Miniſters are in all the Churches of the Saints round about you; your Steadfaſtneſs in the Faith of Chriſt, and Adherence to the grand Truths of his Goſpel, which by a Succeſſion of faithful Paſtors you have been inſtructed in; your Walking, in a good Degree, as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt; your keeping together in your deſtitute State; and your now uniting in your affectionate Choice and Call of our dear Brother, who I truſt is come to

* Ver. 7.

to you, as *a Workman, that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*, are ſignal and exemplary Tokens and Fruits of your Chriſtian Love. However

3. *Abounding* in it *yet more and more*, intimates, that it is not already perfect; but that you ought to ſeek after a *further Progreſs* in it.

It becomes you, after all your Attainments, to keep up a humbling Senſe of your Defects in this, as well as in every other Grace; and to be earneſt with God to invigorate and carry it on to ſtill greater Purity, Livelineſs and Eminence, that it may grow exceedingly in all its Parts. As there was *ſomething lacking in the* Theſſalonian's *Faith*,* which needed to be perfected; ſo, I doubt not but you are conſcious to yourſelves, that there is ſtill ſomething lacking in your *Love*, either with reſpect to its entire Diſintereſtedneſs, Impartiality and Spirituality; or with reſpect to ſome Inſtances and Exerciſes of it; or with reſpect to its Conſtancy, and the Degrees of its Fervour and Activity: There is ſtill room for further Improvements of it, and for rectifying what may be amiſs in it; and therefore you ſhould be ſtill more and more cultivating it, and preſſing after a further Increaſe and wider Extent of it, with a like

* 1 Theſ. iii. 10.

Temper of Mind that governed the Apoſtle, when he ſaid, *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that, for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus. Brethren I count not myſelf to have apprehended; but this one Thing I do, forgetting thoſe Things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe Things which are before, I preſs toward the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.** And

4. Its abounding yet more and more *in Knowledge and in all Judgment* ſuggeſts, that it ought to be a *judicious* Love.

The Word (αισθησει) tranſlated *Judgment*, properly ſignifieth *Senſe*; and ſo may denote ſuch a Judgment, as is formed by a ſpiritual Senſation, Taſte and Savour in the Heart, as well as by right Notions of evangelical Truth and Duty in the Head. The Love, that you ſhould aim at, is not a blind, impetuous Sally of pleaſing and fervent Paſſions; but ſuch a Love, as reſults from a ſettled, well digeſted, ſcriptural Knowledge of the important Doctrines of Chriſtianity; and from all Manner of experimental Acquaintance with the Love of God in Chriſt to your own Souls, and with the

* Phil. iii. 12, 13.

the divine Objects, that engage your Affections.

Light ſhould kindle all your Warmth, that your Love may be influenced by proper Motives; that you may ſee the Grounds and Reaſons of it, and may live under an impreſſive Senſe of your multiplied Obligations to it; and that you may conduct it with ſuch Prudence, as ſhall recommend every Exerciſe and Appearance of it.

If there be not Knowledge and Judgment to engage, direct and ſupport your Love, it will be but like a Land-Flood, that overfloweth with a rapid Stream, but hath no Springs to maintain it, or Banks to conduct it in a regular Courſe; and you will not be able to give a good Reaſon of the *Love*, any more than of the *Hope*, that is in you: Nor will you be ſecure from Danger, either of being partial in it, or of unſeaſonably and indiſcreetly exerting it, to the defeating of its own Ends, and to the Diſcredit of Religion. The Wiſe Man tells us, that *it is not good for the Soul to be without Knowledge*; * and, *my Son*, ſays he, *keep ſound Wiſdom and Diſcretion; ſo ſhall they be Life unto thy Soul, and Grace to thy Neck; then ſhalt thou walk in thy Way ſafely, and thy Foot ſhall not ſtumble*, &c. † Even *a Zeal for God, but not according to Knowledge*,

* Prov. xix. 2. † Prov. iii. 21.——24.

ledge, may have terrible Conſequences to one's ſelf and others; as it had in thoſe *Jews*, who *being ignorant of God's Righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs, ſubmitted not themſelves to the Righteouſneſs of God*;* and who vented their blind Paſſions, with the utmoſt Rage and Fury, againſt Chriſt and his Goſpel: But Love and Zeal under the Conduct of Knowledge, Wiſdom and Experience, brighten the Glory of the Chriſtian-Character, and add Life and Vigour, Beauty and Order to all our Actings toward God and Man. Take heed therefore of an ignorant, ungovernable and misjudged Love of you know not what, or you know not why; but beg of God, that your *Knowledge*, and *ſpiritual Senſe* of divine Things may increaſe together with your Love; that he would give you, *not the Spirit of Fear*, to make you cowardly in his Cauſe; but *the Spirit of Power*, or of Holy Reſolution and Courage, *and the Spirit of Love, and of a ſound Mind*,† which the Apoſtle tells us God had given to him, and to others of his Day; or that you may be *ſound in Faith* and *in Charity*, as it is expreſſed, Tit. ii. 2. and that ye may *know whom ye have believed*, and may *know and believe the Love, that God hath to you*; and ſo may *dwell in God*,

* Rom. x. 2, 3. † 2 Tim. i. 7.

God, who is Love, and, under his Influence, may *dwell in Love* to him and one another, and to all that belong unto him.* This leads us to the next Petition in our Text, which is

II. *That ye may approve Things that are excellent.* Ver. 10. former Part. (εις το δοκιμαζειν.)

The *approving*, here ſpoken of, is ſuch as includes, and is the Reſult of, Examination, Trial and Proof; whereby we come to *diſcern* Things that are excellent, (τα διαφεροντα) Things that in a Way of Preference differ from others; and ſo approve of them, as having found them, upon Judgment and Experience, to be truly excellent. We are to *prove all Things* by the unerring Touch-ſtone of God's Word, and by a ſpiritual Taſte, according to it; not to throw our Minds into a State of perpetual Scepticiſm, like *Children toſſed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine*, or like Perſons that are *ever learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*; but with ſerious and earneſt Deſire to *know the Truth as it is Jeſus*; and to *receive it in the Love of it*, that we may *hold faſt that, which*, upon impartial Search, Trial and Experience, appears to us *to be Good*.† The

* 1 Joh. iv. 16. † 1 Theſ. v. 21.

The more Acquaintance we have with the Things of God, of his Law and of his Goſpel; and the more they are tried and proved, the better they recommend themſelves to us. Hence ſaid the royal *Pſalmiſt*, *O taſte and ſee that the Lord is Good! Bleſſed is the Man that truſteth in him.** And they, who have *taſted that the Lord is gracious*, will *deſire the ſincere*, (αδολον) the pure, genuine, unadulterated *Milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby.* †

It is a good Thing that the Heart be eſtabliſhed with Grace; § and nothing will keep us ſo ſteady in our evangelical Principles, as a ſpiritual Diſcerning of their divine Authority, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and an Experience of their Sweetneſs and Power in our own Souls, and of their happy Influence unto all Chriſtian Love and Obedience. It ſhould therefore be your Concern and Prayer, that you may be ſo far enlightened, and aſſiſted from above, in all your religious Enquiries, as to be able to diſcern the Difference between Truth and Error, Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, eſpecially in Matters of the greateſt Importance, with regard to the Being, Perfections and Providence of God, and our entire Dependence upon him, and Accountableneſs to him; and with regard to the more

* Pſa. xxxiv. 8. † 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. § Heb. xiii. 9.

more peculiar Articles of divine Revelation: Theſe, in general, are ſuch as relate to the Father, Son and Spirit, as three adorable Perſons in the one undivided God-head; ſuch as relate to the free Love and Grace of the Father toward a choſen People, in the whole Scheme of Salvation; ſuch as relate to the Perſon of Chriſt, God-Man, and to his meritorious and efficacious Mediation between God and Sinners of our apoſtate Race; ſuch as relate to the ſupernatural Operations, Aids and Aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit, in the Application of the Benefits of Redemption; and ſuch as relate to the Nature and Neceſſity of Faith and Repentance, and to our multiplied Obligations to all Holineſs, Love and Obedience.

You ſhould ſeek after a *true diſcerning* of theſe, and ſuch like *concerning* Points; that your Judgment, Choice and Eſteem of them, and Attention to them, may be fixed and determined, in Proportion to their real Worth and Excellence, and in Oppoſition to Things that differ from them. And, in the whole Compaſs of what relateth to Faith and Practice, you ſhould carefully diſtinguiſh between thoſe Doctrines and Duties, which are of greater or leſſer Moment; that you may give the *higheſt* Preference to thoſe, which are *moſt excellent*, and may proportion your Regards and Zeal for

thoſe, and other Things, according to their reſpective Weight and Uſefulneſs in the Chriſtian-Scheme. But it is Time to go on to the next Petition, which is

III. *That ye may be ſincere, and without Offence till the Day of Chriſt.* Ver. 10. latter Part.

The Word here uſed for *ſincere* (ειλικρινεις) is taken either from Things, that are clarified by the *Heat*, or are examined, and judged of, in the *Light* of the Sun-beams; and ſo intimates a Sincerity, that is *pure and incorrupt*, free from all Hypocriſy or Deceit, and ſuch as will bear the *ſtricteſt Examination.* —— *Without Offence* (απροσκοποι) may relate either to not being offended ourſelves, or not giving Offence to others, to occaſion Wounding or Falling. Some underſtand *ſincere*, as referring to *God*; and *without Offence*, as referring to *Man*: But I do not ſee why each of them may not refer to *both*: For *Sincerity*, I apprehend, is not ſo much a diſtinct Grace; as it is an eſſential Part of, and runs thro' all our Graces and Duties, and diſtinguiſheth them from falſe Appearances, in their Exerciſe both toward God and Man. And as to being *without Offence*, the Apoſtle in his Account of *that*, at another Time, ſays,

Herein

Herein do I exerciſe myſelf to have always a Conſcience void of Offence, or *without Offence* * (it is the ſame Word that is uſed in our Text) *toward God and toward Man.* We may therefore very well conſider both theſe Expreſſions in our Text, with this double Reference. And the Apoſtle deſired that the *Philippians* might continue in all theſe *invariably*, *till the Day of Chriſt*, and *with an Eye* to the ſolemn Day of his appearing to Judgment, when all Things will be brought to Light, and paſs under the exacteſt Scrutiny; and, ſtripped of all falſe Colours, will be ſeen, and judged of, juſt as they are.

What therefore you, my Chriſtian Friends, ſhould aim at, and be earneſt in your Prayers to God for, is, that you may be incorrupt in your doctrinal and practical Principles, and may be upright in the Temper of your Spirits, in the Exerciſe of every Grace, and Performance of every Duty, and in all your Behaviour toward God, and one another, toward your Paſtor, and toward all Men, whether Friends or Enemies; that you may keep the Doctrines of Chriſt pure and without Mixture; that your Hearts may be right with God according to them; that your Faith and Love, Repentance and Obedience, may be genuine,

* Acts xxiv. 16.

nuine, anſwerable to your holy Profeſſion of them; and that the whole of your Conduct may be approved of God, and approve itſelf to your own Conſciences, and to the Conſciences of all thoſe, that you have to do with. How ſweetly do the Joys of Faith, and of a good Conſcience, harmonize! They mutually aſſiſt each other, and neither of them can be preſerved alone.

Let it therefore be your holy Ambition that, together with your *rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus, and having no Confidence in the Fleſh,** and your *rejoicing with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory, in believing on an unſeen Jeſus*; † you may likewiſe have *this rejoicing, the Teſtimony of your Conſciences, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, ye have your Converſation in the World, and more abundantly towards* one another, and toward him, who is now entruſted with the Care of your Souls; and that this may be ſo evident, as to be *acknowledged by them, even to the End*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of himſelf, and the *Corinthian* Church. §

You ſhould likewiſe take heed of entertaining any Principles, relating to Faith or Practice, and of doing any Thing, that would be an Offence to God; that would grieve his Holy Spirit; that would wound your

* Phil. iii. 3. † 1 Pet. i. 8. § 2 Cor. i. 12, 13.

your own Conſciences, or the Conſciences of your Fellow-Chriſtians; or that would be an Occaſion of ſtumbling, or falling, to yourſelves, or them. Watch and pray, and labour, in the Strength of Chriſt, againſt all *unſcriptural* Notions, and againſt all Sin; *leſt being led away with the Error of the Wicked, ye fall from your own Stedfaſtneſs* * in the Faith, Comfort and Hope, Fellowſhip and Holineſs of the Goſpel.

All this you ſhould attend to, in the Fear of God, with Conſtancy and Perſeverance, as thoſe that expect an awful Day of Reckoning, when *we muſt all ſtand before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt*, and *every one of us ſhall give an Account of himſelf to God*; † and as thoſe who humbly depend on divine Grace, *that he who hath begun the good Work in you, will perform it until the Day of Jeſus Chriſt*; § and that he, who is *faithful* to his Promiſes, will in his own Way (which is the Way of Duty,) *confirm you to the End, that ye may be blameleſs in the Day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who *is able to keep you from falling, and to preſent you faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding Joy.* ‡ Proceed we now to add a few Words on the concluding Part of this Prayer, which is

IV. *That*

* 2 Pet. iii. 17. † Rom. xiv. 10, 12.
§ Phil. i. 6. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. and Jude 24.

IV. *That ye may be filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the Glory and Praiſe of God.* Ver. 11.

Righteouſneſs in this Place, as in many others, ſeems to be a general Term, of much the ſame Import with *perſonal Holineſs*, and to conſiſt of ſuch Things, in Reference to God, ourſelves and others, as are termed *Righteouſneſs*; becauſe they are right and fit in themſelves, and are due from us, according to the juſt and holy Requirements of the moral Law, that eternal and unchangeable Rule of all Righteouſneſs. *Fruits of Righteouſneſs* is a metaphorical Expreſſion, taken from good Trees that bring forth good Fruit; and as Believers are called *Trees of Righteouſneſs, the Planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified*; * ſo their correſpondent Products are ſtiled *Fruits of Righteouſneſs*, as being Holy in their Nature, and proceeding from holy Principles: For ſuch as is the Tree, ſuch are its Fruits, as our bleſſed Lord himſelf tells us, ſaying, *A good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit, neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit*; † *either make the Tree good, and its Fruit good, or elſe make the Tree*

* Iſa. lxi. 3. † Mat. vii. 18.

Tree corrupt, and its Fruit corrupt; for the Tree is known by its Fruit. *

The *Nature* of a Man muſt be changed, in its moral Frame, by regenerating Grace, before he can bring forth true Fruits of Righteouſneſs. Our Apoſtle ſuppoſes, that this *good Work* was begun in theſe *Philippians*, † and had already brought forth proper Fruits of Righteouſneſs: But he prayed that they might be *filled with them*, or abound in them yet more and more, like a Tree richly laden with precious Fruits; or, as he expreſſeth it, Col. i. 10. that *they might be fruitful in every good Work, and increaſe in the Knowledge of God*, to the Satisfaction of their own Souls, and the Good of others.

And of theſe Fruits of Righteouſneſs he ſays, they *are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the Glory and Praiſe of God.* Their being *by Jeſus Chriſt* may poſſibly refer not only to their *original*, but alſo to *the Ground of their Acceptance*, and to their *redounding to the Glory and Praiſe of God.—Praiſe and Glory*, I take to be pretty much Terms of the ſame Import; unleſs *Glory* ſhould relate to the Honour, that accrues to God from thoſe Fruits of Righteouſneſs *themſelves*; and *Praiſe* to the *Aſcriptions* of Glory, that are made to him on their Account: But, be

* Mat. xii. 33. † Chap. i. 6.

be that as it will, theſe Fruits of Righteouſneſs are *by Jeſus Chriſt*, as all Virtue for producing them is derived from him, *without whom* he ſays, with regard to this very Point, his own Diſciples *can do nothing*. * They are alſo *by Jeſus Chriſt*, as all their Acceptance with God is thro' him: For Believers, *as lively Stones, are built up a ſpiritual Houſe, an holy Prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt*. † And they are *by Jeſus Chriſt*, as the Revenue of Glory, which ariſes from them, paſſes to God thro' him, *that God in all Things may be glorified thro' Jeſus Chriſt*. § In this Manner our Fruits of Righteouſneſs are to be brought forth, not to *ourſelves*, as aiming at our own Honour, Reputation and Character in them; but to *God*, as their ultimate End. And they really do turn to his Praiſe and Glory, when they are thus brought forth, and that with great Variety and Plenty.

It therefore concerneth you of this Church of Chriſt, who are *God's Huſbandry*, ‡ and who ſeverally are *planted in the Houſe of the Lord*, in order to your *flouriſhing in the Courts of our God*, to beg of him, that ye may *bring forth Fruit to the lateſt Age*, ‖ even the moſt excellent Fruit, Fruits of Righte-

* Joh. xv. 5. † 1 Pet. ii. 5. § 1 Pet. iv. 11.
‡ 1 Cor. iii. 9. ‖ Pſa. xcii. 13, 14.

Righteouſneſs *in all holy Converſation, and Godlineſs*; in all *Sobriety*, with Reſpect to the Government of your own Paſſions, Appetites and Manners; in all *Righteouſneſs and Beneficence* toward your Fellow-Chriſtians, and Fellow-Creatures; and in all *Piety* toward God, with Regard to all his Ordinances and Commandments. And it ſhould be your daily and earneſt Prayer and Endeavour, by his Grace, that you may *abound* in them exceedingly, on all fit and proper Occaſions, even unto the richeſt Fulneſs; that like a *Tree planted by the Rivers of Water* you may *bring forth Fruit in its Seaſon*,* as is ſaid of the godly Man; and that all the *Fruits of the Spirit*, as the Apoſtle calls them, Gal. v. 22, 23. may be found in you, and may evidently diſplay themſelves in *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith, Meekneſs, Temperance*; and in all the Duties of the *religious* and *civil* Life, to which you may be called in your reſpective Stations. And as ever you would indeed increaſe in your Fruits of Righteouſneſs, and bring them forth in a Manner well pleaſing to God, and for his Honour and Glory, Look to Chriſt for Aſſiſtance and Acceptance in them, *that God in all Things may be glorified, thro' him*; to

* Pſa. i. 3.

to whom be Praiſe, and Dominion for ever and ever, Amen. *.

CONCLUSION.

Thus we have gone through the ſeveral Parts of our Text; and as the Portion of Time, allotted to me for this Service, is fully ſpent, and the Diſcourſe hath been, all along, ſo much in a Strain of practical Addreſs to you, the Members of this Goſpel-Church, I muſt leave the further Application of it to your own ſerious Reflections, under the gracious Light and Influence of the Bleſſed Spirit. Only, for a Concluſion of the whole, permit me, my Chriſtian Friends, to beſeech you in the Bowels of Jeſus Chriſt, and to charge you in his Name and Preſence, and as you would anſwer it to him, *who ſhall judge the Quick and the Dead, at his Appearing, and his Kingdom*, † that, in recollecting what hath been humbly offered, you would particularly conſider it with a Reference to your *reverend Paſtor*, who is become ſo by your own Choice: Pray for him, and that *your Love*, which you have profeſſed in giving yourſelves up to his Charge, may be continually, and yet more abundantly, *growing* in judicious and affectionate Reſpects to him, for his Work's

* 1 Pet. iv. 11. † 2 Tim. iv. 1.

Work's Sake; becauſe of its Importance to the Glory of Chriſt, and your own Edification and Increaſe; and becauſe of the great Difficulties, that will attend him, and the Need he will have of your heartily and tenderly encouraging him, and uniting with him, in fulfilling it.

And as ever you would ſhew your Regard to him, in the moſt endearing Manner, and would profit by his Miniſtry, and be *his Hope and Joy* now, and his *Crown of rejoicing in the Preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his Coming*,* Let it be your fervent, importunate Prayer, and your only Strife, to excel each other in Love to Chriſt, and him, and one another, and in every other Grace and Duty; that, by Means of his holy Miniſtrations, and your ſubmitting to him in the Lord, *your Love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge and in all Judgment; that ye may approve Things that are excellent; that ye may be ſincere, and without Offence till the Day of Chriſt; being filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the Glory and Praiſe of God.*

* 1 Theſ. ii. 19.

The END *of the* SERMON.

THE EXHORTATION

To the REVEREND

Mr. *THOMAS GIBBONS*,

GIVEN AT HIS

ORDINATION:

By THOMAS HALL.

THE

Exhortation, &c.

IF THE SOLEMNITIES of this Day be well underſtood, and rightly viewed in the Actings of Faith, they may juſtly fill us with the Tranſports of an holy Joy: For they teſtify the ſame Thing, as did the *Tabernacle of Witneſs* of old, even that *GOD will dwell with Men.* And in the Tranſactions that have now paſſed, we have an illuſtrious Memorial of the Grace of GOD in the Salvation of Sinners; ſince a GOSPEL MINISTRY had never been appointed, but for the *Deſign*, that this Grace ſhould be proclaimed and magnified.

It is, we truſt, *Worthy and Dear Brother*, from a ſincere and earneſt Deſire of being made inſtrumental herein, that you have devoted yourſelf to this Service, and

in

in a dutiful Regard to the Direction of Providence have complied with the preſſing Call of this Church, in accepting the moſt honourable, but confeſſedly the moſt difficult Office, that any of the Servants of the Lord can be employed in. However, be not diſcouraged; for He that ſends you forth, has promiſed to *be with you*, and *through His Strength* you ſhall be *able to do all Things.*

And ſince it was your own, as well as the Church's Deſire, that upon this ſolemn Occaſion, I ſhould give the *Word of Exhortation*, I doubt not but you will bear with me, while I ſay to you, as the Apoſtle directed ſhould be ſaid to *Archippus*,

COLOSS. iv. 17.

Take heed to the Miniſtry which thou haſt received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

This Paſſage, *Sir*, I thought would be a proper Baſis, upon which to ground the Advice, that in the Name and Fear of the Lord I am now to give you.

The Miniſtry you have received is of a ſpiritual Nature, deſigned for the publiſhing the glad Tidings of Peace, made by the Blood of *Chriſt* with the great GOD, for Men that have ſinned and rebelled againſt

againſt Him. It is therefore called *the Miniſtry of Reconciliation.* * This Miniſtry then muſt be looked upon as a Matter of great Importance; and the faithful Diſcharge of it will be attended with many Difficulties. Theſe ariſe, partly from the Nature and Greatneſs of the Work itſelf; partly from our own Weakneſs; and ſtill farther, from the conſtant Oppoſition it meets with from Earth and Hell.

The Juſtneſs of theſe obvious Remarks ſhews it to be neither needleſs, nor foreign from the Work of the Day, that in the warmeſt and moſt preſſing Terms I ſhould exhort you to *take heed to this Miniſtry, that you fulfil it.*

And in general, Take heed to Two Things.

I. That you fulfil it *in all its Parts.*

II. That you fulfil it *in a right Manner.*

I. Fulfil it *in all its Parts.*

The Office you have received has a WORK included in it. *Separate me Barnabas and Saul, ſaid the Holy Ghoſt, for the WORK whereunto I have called them.* † Again, *If a Man deſire the Office of a Biſhop, he deſireth a good WORK.* § You

* 2 Cor. v. 18. † Acts xiii. 2. § 1 Tim. iii. 1.

are to *labour* in Chriſt's Vineyard. You are ſeparated to take Pains; not to take State, not to loiter. And as the Labour in a Vineyard has different Parts; ſo has the Labour and Work of the Miniſtry; which are all laid out and ſettled by the Lord Himſelf, whereof not one is to be neglected, overlooked, or omitted. Let me then remind you of the ſeveral Parts of your Work, and beſeech you to conſider with me what you have to do.

But here I would apprize you, that tho' I intend ſome diſtinct Heads of Advice with Regard to *the Manner* in which this Miniſtry is to be performed, yet I ſhall take the Liberty to intermix a few Things to this Purpoſe, even while I am profeſſedly ſpeaking of *the Work* itſelf; becauſe I apprehend, ſome Hints may be thus introduced with the greateſt Advantage.

Now to give you a ſhort View of the ſeveral Parts of *your Work*, Remember,

1. You are to *labour in the Word and Doctrine.*

To your Office it belongs, to diſpenſe the Myſteries of the Kingdom, and to preach the Goſpel of Chriſt. *Neceſſity is laid upon you, yea, Woe is unto* you *if* you *preach not the*

the Goſpel; * the pure unmixed Goſpel, even *the Goſpel of GOD* concerning *his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; that Goſpel, whereof CHRIST is the main Argument.

In Scripture-Language, *Preaching the Goſpel*, and *Preaching Chriſt*, are put for the ſame Thing. And, as one obſerves, CHRIST fills [*utramque Paginam*] *both Pages* of the Book of GOD. The *Old Teſtament* is full of Chriſt, tho' *there* He is under a Vail: The *New Teſtament* is likewiſe remarkably full of Chriſt, and *here* He is openly manifeſted and revealed. Let CHRIST then be the reigning Subject of your Diſcourſes; for you are called to be *a Miniſter of the New Teſtament*, † a Miniſter and Servant of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

You are therefore carefully to ſet forth the ſingular and wonderful Conſtitution of his Perſon, as GOD-MAN; the Glory of his Office, as *Mediator*; with the peculiar Relation He ſtands in to his People, as He is *the Head of the Church, and the Saviour of the Body*. § You are to declare the amazing Things which He has done and ſuffered, that He might *bring in* an *everlaſting Righteouſneſs*; ‡ and to ſhew what glorious Privileges and ſurprizing Benefits were purchaſed by his Obedience and Death.

* 1 Cor. ix. 16. † 2 Cor. iii. 6.
§ Eph. v. 23. ‡ Dan. ix. 24.

In your Preaching let the Spring of Redemption be opened, as it lay in the eternal Purpoſe and electing Love of the FATHER. Explain alſo the Method, with the Means and Way, thro' which the Choſen and Redeemed of the Lord are made the happy Partakers of it. Be clear and full in pointing out the mighty, the gracious, and ſovereign Operations of the infinitely Holy and Bleſſed SPIRIT, in the great Work of Regeneration: And inſiſt much upon the abſolute Neceſſity thereof, in order to Men's having *true Faith*, that they may be *vitally* united to *Chriſt* at their effectual Calling.

In the midſt of an holy Zeal for theſe grand and important Articles of Divine Revelation, forget not to ſhew Believers the Obligations they are under, to ſtudy all ſuitable Returns of Gratitude and Dependance, of Love and new Obedience. But be ever careful to diſtinguiſh clearly between *the Law* and *the Goſpel*, between the Two Covenants, viz. *the Covenant of Works*, and *the Covenant of Grace*,——Let the People ſee, that *the firſt Covenant* is now unavoidably *the Miniſtration of Death* * to all that are under it; that *by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*, † yea, the Knowledge both of the Sinfulneſs and Miſery of our Natural Condition ſince the Fall; but that thereby

* 2 Cor. iii. 7. † Rom. iii. 20.

by no Diſcovery is made of the leaſt Relief for any Tranſgreſſor. Thus endeavour, that thro' the Convictions and Operations of the Spirit of GOD, ſecure Sinners may be awakened, humbled, and filled with Self-Abaſement.——Teach likewiſe, that Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Salvation are certainly ſecured to Believers by *the Covenant of Grace*, and by that only, thro' the Redemption of Chriſt, its Glorious Head and Mediator. Thus let it be your Care, that under the farther Work of the Divine Spirit, diſtreſſed Souls may be encouraged, raiſed, and comforted.——Let all this be done, as it was by the Apoſtle, in a Way that ſhall *eſtabliſh the Law*, * as it is an everlaſting Rule of Righteouſneſs, and the perfect, infallible, and only Rule of Duty and Holy Walking: And yet in a Way, that ſhall ſhew, as he did, that Believers are *delivered from the Law*, † as it was a Covenant for Happineſs and Life.

Endeavour alſo, that the People may clearly apprehend, what a vaſt and momentous Difference there is, between *the imputed Righteouſneſs of Chriſt*, and *the inherent Righteouſneſs of the Saints*.——Shew them, that it is *the imputed Righteouſneſs of Chriſt* alone, that can anſwer the Demands of the broken Law, ſatisfy the divine Juſtice, and pacify

* Rom. iii. 31. † Rom. vii. 6.

pacify the Wrath of the infinitely Holy Majeſty, whom we have moſt vilely affronted and offended: That it is His Righteouſneſs, and not any Act, Duty, or Work of ours, which diſcharges the Sinner from his Guilt, procures him Acceptance, and makes him ſhine before GOD; which gives him his Title to Heaven, and is the ſure and only Foundation of eternal Life.—— But then be careful to inſtruct them, that *Inherent Righteouſneſs* is the Sanctification of the Soul; that this diſcharges from Hypocriſy, and, ſo far as it prevails, heals the Leproſy of our Nature, recovers us from the Deformity and Pollution of our apoſtate State, makes us ſhine before Men, is the Evidence of our Salvation, and our neceſſary Meetneſs for the heavenly Glory.

Faithfully apprize the Saints, that, after their higheſt Attainments in Grace, their *Inherent Righteouſneſs* at preſent is, and while they are in the Body ever will be *imperfect:* And for this Reaſon, how much ſoever it ought to be loved, yet it can never be fit to be truſted. But aſſure them with the ſtrongeſt Confidence, as well you may, that *the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt*, the incarnate Word, is an *everlaſting* and *perfect Righteouſneſs.* Preſs them earneſtly therefore, that while they conſcientiouſly make the happy Growth and rich Increaſe of

of their *Inherent Righteouſneſs* the Matter of their moſt careful Sollicitude and ſerious Endeavour, and while they account every freſh Experience of the Exerciſe thereof to be the juſt Occaſion of an holy Thankſgiving and Joy; that yet, living and dying, they conſtantly make *the imputed Righteouſneſs of Chriſt*, and that alone, their Glory: For He is *the Lord, in whom all the Seed of Iſrael ſhall be juſtified, and ſhall glory.* *

Thus, *Brother*, you are to *labour in the Word and Doctrine.* † And in preſſing this, I am exhorting you to the ſame Thing, and would do it in the ſame awful Name, as *Paul* did his beloved *Timothy*, when he ſaid, *I charge thee therefore before GOD, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt,——Preach the Word*, and as Health and Strength ſhall be granted, *be inſtant in Seaſon, and out of Seaſon.* § This however is but one Part of your Work, tho' it be a principal One: For

2. You are to be *the Mouth of the People* unto GOD, as well as *his Mouth* unto them.

The ſolemn Aſſemblies of the Saints are appointed, that GOD may not only *ſpeak to them*, but *hear from them.* Every particular Church is his Temple, in which He

* Iſai. xlv. 25. † 1 Tim. v. 17. § 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

He is to be honoured by the Prayers and Praiſes of his Children, while they are bleſt with his Inſtructions. And tho' upon ſome Occaſions, and at ſome Seaſons, it be incumbent upon any of the *Brethren*, whoſe Gifts and Capacities in the Judgment of the Church are fitted for it, to go before the reſt in thoſe holy Exerciſes: Yet this Work belongs in a ſpecial Manner to the *Paſtor* of the Church; and you, *Sir*, are to perform it, as the Miniſter of the Congregation.

You are indeed, according to the beſt Knowledge you ſhall have of the People's Wants and Neceſſities, of their Difficulties, Trials, and Temptations, of their Doubts and Fears, of their Convictions and Experiences, their Defects or Attainments in Religion, humbly *in the Name of Chriſt* to ſpread their reſpective Caſes at the Foot-ſtool of the Throne of Grace in your ſolitary and *ſecret Addreſſes* there.——You are moreover to *pray with them*, as well as *for them*, upon all *private Occaſions*, as the Exigencies of their Caſe, as the Nature of their own or their Families Circumſtances, with their Deſire and Requeſt, ſhall make it neceſſary.——But beſides all this, you are to be *their Mouth unto GOD* in their *Church-Worſhip* and publick Aſſemblies; and there to offer up their humble Confeſſions of Sin,

their

their earneſt Supplications for Grace, with their thankful Acknowledgments of Mercies received, both Temporal and Spiritual. You are to aſſiſt, and to expreſs, the Breathings of their Souls, and the Workings of their Hearts, GOD-ward and CHRIST-ward; whether theſe ſhall ariſe from the Actings of Faith, Repentance, and Submiſſion, or from the Exerciſe of Love, Hope, and Confidence in GOD. You are to help them alſo in their fervent Wreſtlings with the Lord for the Converſion of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and for the Enlargement of the *Kingdom of Chriſt* in all Parts of the World in general, and in theſe Lands, in this City, and this Congregation in particular.——Thus let me exhort you, in the Apoſtle's Words to *Timothy*, that *Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men; for this is good and acceptable in the Sight of GOD our Saviour.* *

And here let me beſeech you, *Dear Brother*, to take heed that your Worſhip and Addreſſes to GOD be ever *ſuited* to the *Goſpel-Diſpenſation*; under which GOD has more clearly than ever revealed Himſelf as ſubſiſting in Three Perſons, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. The Holy TRINITY IN UNITY therefore is to be the Object of our Faith, and Worſhip; in

* 1 Tim. ii. 1, 3.

which Aſcriptions are to be given to each of the Divine Perſons, as having Communion in the ſame undivided Nature: And this is to be done by the ſame religious, reverential, and adoring Acts of the Mind. Remember then, that we are to worſhip GOD, not barely as the *Heathen* profeſs to do, as He is *the Father of all Things*; but as the *Goſpel* reveals Him, that is, as *the GOD and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*,* and in and through Him *the Father of Mercies*, † and *the GOD* and Giver *of all Grace* § unto his Church and People.

Farther, in your Confeſſions, be careful to lay yourſelf, and the whole Congregation, low before GOD; making an expreſs and diſtinct Acknowledgment of the Apoſtacy of our Nature, of our original Guilt and Defilement, of the inward Plague of the Heart, and of the ſecret Workings of indwelling Sin, as well as of the open Violations and outward Tranſgreſſions of the Law of GOD. Let Hell-Deſervings be confeſſed, and lamented; that, from the Remembrance and Senſe of theſe, you and others may be the more excited to admire the Riches, the Freeneſs, and Sovereignty, of the Grace that pities and ſaves us.—— In your Thankſgivings, never forget to bleſs GOD for JESUS CHRIST, for an incarnate, crucified,

* Eph. i. 3. † 2 Cor. i. 3. § 1 Pet. v. 10.

crucified, riſen, and exalted Saviour. And while you give Thanks to *the Father* for his Love in ſending his Son, be not unmindful to bleſs *the Redeemer* for his infinite Condeſcenſion in Coming, nor to praiſe *the Holy Ghoſt* for his Grace in revealing Chriſt, and leading us into an experimental Acquaintance with Him and his Salvation.——In a Word, in celebrating this, and indeed all other Parts of Divine Service, endeavour that you, and all who ſhall join with you, may worſhip in *the Way*, which by the Lord Himſelf is pointed out, as beſt ſuited to the Goſpel-State, and moſt expreſſive of an Evangelical Spirit in all the Worſhippers. This leads me to another Part of your Work, viz.

3. You are ſolemnly to *adminiſter* the Seals of the Covenant, *Baptiſm* and *the Lord's Supper.*

As in Preaching we have a crucified Saviour brought to our Ear, ſo in theſe ſacred Appointments we have Him preſented to our very Eye, and Taſte.

Theſe then are to be adminiſtred and obſerved according to Chriſt's Command, as remarkable Tokens and very inſtructive Documents of ſpiritual Things. You are to explain theſe Signs, by ſhewing to what

End they are appointed of the Lord; even to remind us of the Fall of Man, and to point out the Pollution, Wretchedneſs, and Miſery of our guilty State, and to ſignify to us that the Way of our Recovery is thro' the Mediation and Blood of *Chriſt*; who being *ſacrificed for us* as *our Paſſover*,* has made a real and full Atonement for Sin, has ratified and confirmed the everlaſting Covenant, and hereby ſecured for his People all the Bleſſings therein contained.

Theſe holy and poſitive Inſtitutions are likewiſe to be uſed as diſcriminating Signs of the real Separation of true Believers from the World at preſent, and of their farther Separation from all Unbelievers, and from all the Wicked and Damned in Hell, in the World that is to come.

Thus, *my Brother*, with the Adminiſtration of theſe external Symbols, you are to give from the Word of GOD thoſe Inſtructions concerning them, which may help the People to attend upon them with Knowledge and Underſtanding, and to improve them to the Increaſe of their Humility and Hatred of Sin in the Exerciſe of an evangelical Repentance, to the Eſtabliſhment of their Faith and Hope, and to the Furtherance of their Walk with GOD in

* 1 Cor. v. 7.

in all holy Obedience, in the delightful Actings of Joy and Love.

4. Another Part of your Work is to attend to the *Order* and *Diſcipline* of GOD's Houſe.

The Power indeed of Admiſſions, Elections, and Cenſures, is lodged in *the Church*: And the ſpecial Part you are to bear in the *Miniſterial Exerciſe* thereof, is to be performed according to the Approbation, Conſent, and Determination of the *Brethren*. But then it lies upon you to inſtruct, guide, and aſſiſt the Church, by clearing up their Duty from the Word of GOD, and by laying before them the Rules that are there preſcribed for their Conduct, in all the Caſes that ſhall come under their Conſideration. And it is Part of *the Overſight* that belongs to your Office, to ſee, that in all their Proceedings they act with an holy *Decency* and *Order*; * and that all their Works be done in Charity and Love, with Reverence and godly Fear.

Farther, You are carefully to maintain the Incloſure, and to keep up the Fence, which Chriſt has ſet about his Church; that it may appear to be a Body wholly diſtinct from the World, and that *the Precious*

* 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

cious may be ſeparated *from the Vile.** Remember, "GOD's Houſe is erected for the "Entertainment, not of ſecure Sinners, but "of returning Prodigals; for the Enter-"tainment, not of Hypocrites and dead "Sinners, but of the Living in *Jeruſalem*, "who are neither deaf to GOD's Calls, "dumb to his Praiſe, nor wilfully lame in "his Service."

You are to guard then, as far as poſſible, that none may be ſuffered to *creep in unawares*, by whom *the Grace of GOD* would be *turned into Licentiouſneſs*, the Charter of the Church betrayed, or the Temple of GOD defiled. Be exceeding careful, that *the Camp* be kept *holy*; and often remind the Church of the Warning and Caution, which *Moſes* gave to the Children of *Iſrael*, ſaying, *Let the Lord thy GOD ſee no unclean Thing in Thee*, that ſhould provoke Him to *turn away from Thee.* †

Take heed, that there may be that Purity in Doctrine, Diſcipline, and Worſhip, that Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith, and that Tenderneſs of Conſcience; that Holineſs in Converſation, that Zeal for Chriſt, for his Truths, and the Glory of his Name; with that Unity, Peace, and Love among the Brethren, as ſhall make this Church, like *Ephraim* of old, *a ſpreading Branch*, § *under*

* Jer. xv. 19. † Deut. xxiii. 14. § Hoſ. xiv. 6, 7.

der the Shadow whereof weary Pilgrims may find a ſuitable Reſt, and much ſweet Refreſhment for their Souls.

5. That you may fulfil all the Parts of your Miniſtry, you muſt *viſit the Flock*, and *watch over them.*

Great as your Work is, in the Study, in the Pulpit, and in Church-Aſſemblies; yet the whole of it does not lye there. You are to *preach Chriſt from Houſe to Houſe*, * and to follow your publick Inſtructions and Exhortations, with particular, private, and perſonal Application, as proper Seaſons and Opportunities can be obtained. Endeavour, that your Viſits may be truly uſeful and profitable; managed in a Subſerviency to the great Deſign of the Goſpel, and your profeſſed Regard to the Good of Souls; diffuſing the Light, and promoting the Savour of Divine Things.

The Inſtructions you have *freely received*, *freely give*; † be ready to impart, willing to communicate, and *apt to teach.* § Conſider, it was for this very Purpoſe that *GOD has* graciouſly *ſhined into your Heart*, even that you through his Bleſſing might be inſtrumental in *giving* to others *the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of GOD, in the Perſon*

* Acts v. 42. † Mat. x. 8. § 1 Tim. iii. 2.

Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt. * And that you may have the greater Advantage for this, let there be an Intimacy cultivated between you and the People, in a holy, chriſtian, and brotherly Manner. Seek an Acquaintance with the *Seed of the Church*, and the young Ones of the Congregation; with thoſe eſpecially, that are under any ſerious Awakenings and hopeful Convictions, who greatly need the Sympathy, Counſel, and Aſſiſtance of a faithful Miniſter.

Watch, that in all your Behaviour among them, there may be that *Sobriety*; and in all your Deportment, that *Gravity*, † which becomes a *Man of GOD*. As the Apoſtle wrote to *Timothy*, ſo muſt I ſay to you, *Let no Man deſpiſe thy Youth*; (that is, Let no Man have any, no, not the leaſt Occaſion to deſpiſe it, upon the Account of any Vanity or Pride, any Lightneſs or Raſhneſs, any Miſcarriage or even Imprudence in your Conduct:) *But be thou an Example of the Believers, in Word, in Converſation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity.* §

Endeavour, at the ſame time, to be affable, condeſcending, and eaſy of Acceſs, towards all that would be glad to converſe with you about the Things of Salvation. Be faithful and humble in declaring the Dealings

* 2 Cor. iv. 6. † Tit. ii. 7. § 1 Tim. iv. 12.

Dealings of Grace with your Soul, and free in communicating *your own Experience.* Thus encourage, and, if poſſible, engage the People to uſe the like Freedom with you. Take all prudent and faithful Methods to know their Wants; and obſerve their Wandrings. Enter as far as poſſible into the moſt ſecret Sentiments, and inward Workings of their Hearts: Thus you will know the better, how to provide proper Food, and to *give to every one their Portion in due Seaſon:* * Yea, hereby you will have a Direction in the Courſe of your Miniſtry, what Caſes it will be neceſſary for you to ſpeak to, what Doubts to reſolve, what Objections to anſwer, what Cordials to provide, or what Antidotes and precious Remedies to prepare; that *the Sick* may be *healed*, or the *ſcattered* and *broken* be *gathered* and *made whole.* † This Care, *dear Sir*, is included in *the Overſight* you are to take of *all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeer.* §

Farther, in your Viſits let not *the Poor, the Fatherleſs*, or *Widow* be forgotten *in their Affliction.* ‡ For ſince the Word of GOD points out a Regard to theſe as one of the eſſential Duties of Religion, the Omiſſion hereof in a Miniſter would be ex-

* Luke xii. 42.
† Ezek. xxxiv. 4.
§ Acts xx. 28.
‡ Jam. i. 27.

ceeding criminal, and highly ſhameful. And ſo would be the neglecting to *viſit the Sick*, and ſuch as are *the Lord's Priſoners*, or thoſe who are under the *Arreſt of Death*, and juſt launching forth into the vaſt Ocean of Eternity; eſpecially, when your Company, Aſſiſtance, and Prayers with them are deſired.

Theſe are Caſes, that will try the Ability, Judgment, and Skill, yea, try the Compaſſion, Patience, and Faithfulneſs of Miniſters, perhaps as much as any. And after all your Diligence and Care in obſerving the Hints that have been given under this Head, it will be happy, if you can prevent Occaſion for the like bitter Lamentation, that was made by *Mr. John Welſh*, a Miniſter, who in the laſt Century was of great Renown in *Scotland*. This holy Man, thro' the heavy Preſſure of his Mind, and his deep Concern for the Kingdom and Intereſt of Chriſt, did frequently ariſe in the Night, and often cried to GOD by Prayer and Supplication at ſuch Seaſons: But one Time eſpecially, (as *Mr. Fleming* tells us*) he was found overwhelmed with Grief, and being aſked the Occaſion, he replied, "He "had that to preſs him, which the Perſon "who made the Enquiry had not; ſince "he had Thouſands of Souls to anſwer for, "but knew not how it was with many of "them."

* See his Fulfilling of the Scripture. Fol. Ed. pag. 188.

"them." Now how impoſſible is it, without a dreadful Stupidity, that Miniſters ſhould eſcape ſuch Anguiſh and Horror, if the Duty of Viſiting, and of a free religious Converſing with the People be neglected?——And here by the Way, what Occaſion have we, *my Brethren*, who have had any long Standing in the Miniſtry, to plead, like the great *Uſher*, that the Lord would pardon our Omiſſions! Once more,

6. You are bound by Office, and muſt therefore ſolemnly *bleſs the People* of the Lord *in His Name.*

The *Prieſts*, the *Sons of Aaron*, were appointed to *bleſs the Children of Iſrael.** Nor was this Appointment peculiar to the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation: For we frequently meet with an *Apoſtolical Benediction* in the *New Teſtament*, as well as a *Levitical Bleſſing* in the *Old.* And what we find at the Cloſe of moſt of the inſpired *Epiſtles* ſhews us, what ſhould be at the Concluſion of our Worſhip, when the Miniſters of the Lord are ſent to deliver a Meſſage in his Name: And this is a ſolemn Pronouncing *GOD's Love* and *Bleſſing* upon His Church and People, upon *All that love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in Sincerity.*†

* Numb. vi. 23. † Eph. vi. 24.

It was *our Saviour's* Direction to the Meſſengers whom He ſent forth with the Goſpel of the Kingdom, that *their Peace* or Bleſſing ſhould *come upon thoſe they were ſent to*, even upon ſuch as in a Goſpel-Senſe are ſaid to be *worthy*. * Thus ſhould all Goſpel-Miniſters *bleſs the People in the Name of the Lord.*

We are not tied indeed to any particular Form of Words; but it is certain, this will be done beſt *in Scripture-Language*; and to be ſure in ſuch Terms, as ſhall manifeſtly evidence an holy Regard to each of the *ſacred THREE*, either by a diſtinct Mention of *each divine Perſon*, or by ſuch an expreſs Mention of *the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as is adapted to excite the higheſt Reverence of HIS, as well as of the FATHER'S, and the SPIRIT'S Glory.

Here let me take Occaſion to ſuggeſt, that when you *pronounce the Bleſſing*, you ſhould endeavour to do it with the greateſt Solemnity and Awe, and with ſuch an audible Voice, that all the Congregation may hear; that none for want of this may be tempted to withdraw, or may begin to move away, as is the ignorant and ſhameful Practice of Perſons in ſome Places, before the Worſhip in this ſolemn Manner be

* Mat. x. 13.

be fully cloſed and ended. But let there be no Occaſion, no Temptation for any ſuch irreverent Behaviour in this Aſſembly.

Thus, *Sir*, I have given you ſome View of the *ſeveral Parts of your Work*, and ſhall proceed no farther upon this Head: Yet bear with me, while I briefly exhort you to *take heed to this Miniſtry*,

II. That you fulfil it *in a right Manner*.

The Apoſtle's Caution means, no doubt, that the utmoſt Care ſhould be taken, *how* this Miniſtry be performed; that it be diſcharged in a *becoming* and *holy Manner*, in a Way that is ſuitable to the Dignity of this ſacred Office, to the Importance of its Work, and the Greatneſs of its Deſign, to the Authority of its Appointment, and the Spirituality of its Nature. Let me therefore, beſides what I have hinted already, add a few Things more, which are directly ſuited to this Purpoſe, under the following Heads.

1. Take heed to this Miniſtry, that it be diſcharged *in all good Fidelity*.

You know, *Sir*, that we are but *Servants*. We are *the Miniſters of Chriſt, Stewards of the Myſteries of GOD*, and no more:

more: Now, as the Apoſtle declares, *it is required in Stewards, that a Man be found faithful.** Let me exhort you therefore, *dear Brother*, to aim at the greateſt Faithfulneſs.

In your *Preaching*, go forth always in the ſame Spirit, and with the like Tenderneſs of Conſcience, as did the Prophet *Micaiah*; who notwithſtanding all the Tampering and Solicitation uſed by *the King's Meſſenger*, yet reſolved and declared, *As the Lord liveth, what the Lord ſaith unto me, that will I ſpeak.*† Thus, *Sir*, do you keep cloſe to the Revelation which *Chriſt* has given us, without any Alteration, Addition, or Diminution, in any one Point whatever. *Shun not to declare the whole Counſel of GOD*; § but *preach the Preaching that He bids you.* ‡ Shew that you are *not aſhamed of Chriſt*, or *of his Words, in this adulterous and ſinful Generation*; ‖ but that by the Grace of GOD you are reſolved to *confeſs Him before Men*, ** however *the Wiſe*, *the Scribe*, or *the Diſputer of this World* †† may contradict, or dare to blaſpheme.

Be faithful likewiſe in the *Adminiſtration* of all *Ordinances*. Aim at an exact Conformity

* 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. † 1 Kings xxii. 13, 14.
§ Acts xx. 27. ‡ Jonah iii. 2. ‖ Mark viii. 38.
** Mat. x. 32. †† 1 Cor. i. 20.

formity to the Divine Inſtitution. Be careful, on the one Hand, *not to be wiſe above what is written*; * and on the other, not to be *wiſe below it*. It was a quaint Saying, but a juſt Obſervation, of the excellent *Mr. Maſon*, that "to be wiſe below "what is written, is to be *poorly wiſe*; but "to be wiſe above what is written, is to be "*richly fooliſh*." And neither of theſe Characters becomes private Chriſtians, much leſs *Paſtors*, who are to *feed the People with Knowledge and Underſtanding*. † Do you therefore ſet before you the Faithfulneſs of the *Apoſtle*, as a Pattern for your moſt careful Imitation: *For he delivered* to the People *what he had received of the Lord*, § and that, juſt as he had received it. Thus by your Practice and Inſtruction do you *teach Men to obſerve all Things*, and nothing elſe in Religion, but what *Chriſt has commanded*. ‡ I muſt *give thee Charge*, then, *in the Sight of GOD, and before Chriſt Jeſus, that thou keep his Commandment, without Spot, and unrebukeable*. ‖

2. Let this Miniſtry be fulfilled, *with Judgment* and *Skill*.

Of old *the Prieſt's Lips* were to *keep Knowledge*, and *the People* were to *ſeek the Law*

* 1 Cor. iv. 6. † Jer. iii. 15. § 1 Cor. xi. 23.
‡ Mat. xxviii. 20. ‖ 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14.

Law at his Mouth. * Thus Goſpel-Miniſters are to *feed the Church of GOD:* And they are to *take heed to all the Flock* † committed to their Care. They are to *feed*, both *the Lambs*, and *the Sheep*, § in Chriſt's Fold. Endeavour then in your Miniſtrations to bring forth *the ſincere Milk of the Word*, that there may be Nouriſhment for thoſe that are but *Babes in Chriſt.* ‡ Let there alſo be *ſtrong Meat* for *grown Chriſtians*, ‖ that *Fathers in Chriſt*, and *Men* labouring under heavy Trials and ſtrong Temptations, may be confirmed, ſtrengthened, and comforted. Let your *Miniſtry* be faithfully and wiſely *ſuited* to the various Occaſions, and to the different State, of Perſons in a mixed Audience. Speak ſometimes like *Boanerges*, or *the Sons of Thunder*, ** that *dead Sinners* may *hear the Voice of Chriſt* in his Word, and may *live.* †† At other Times, ſpeak like a *Barnabas*, *a Son of Conſolation*, §§ that *the Broken-hearted* may be *healed*, *that the Captives* may *obtain Deliverance*, and *they that are bruiſed* be *ſet at Liberty.* ‡‡

Remember alſo, that you are *ſet for the Defence of the Goſpel*, ‖‖ as well as for the Pub-

* Mal. ii. 7. † Acts xx. 28. § John xxi. 15, 16.
‡ 1 Pet. ii. 2. ‖ Heb. v. 14. ** Mark iii. 17.
†† John. v. 25. §§ Acts iv. 36. ‡‡ Luke iv. 18.
‖‖ Phil. i. 17.

Publication of it. Be cautious indeed, how *Controverſies* are brought needleſsly into the Pulpit: Yet it muſt be your Care, as *a good Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt*, that the Minds of the People may be inſtructed, yea, *nouriſhed up in the Words of Faith and of good Doctrine*, * to the End that *their Hearts* may be experimentally and ſavingly *eſtabliſhed with Grace*. † In your Preaching, let there be a ſolid, juſt, and cloſe Way of Reaſoning out of the Scripture: *In Doctrine ſhewing Uncorruptneſs, Gravity, Sincerity*, uſing *ſound Speech that cannot be condemned*. § An upright Aim at this will certainly require, that you *give yourſelf to Reading*, ‡ *Meditation*, ‖ and *Prayer*; ** that you may be favoured with Light, Guidance, and Aſſiſtance, may be made *Wiſe to win Souls* †† unto Chriſt, and be enabled to open, alledge, and maintain *the Truth as it is in Jeſus*; §§ that you may be fitted alſo *in Meekneſs to inſtruct thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if GOD peradventure will give them Repentance to the Acknowledging of the Truth*. ‡‡ *Study* then *to ſhew yourſelf approved unto GOD*; an *able Miniſter of the New Teſtament; not of the Letter, but of the Spirit*; ‖‖ *a Workman*

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* 1 Tim. iv. 6. † Heb. xiii. 9. § Tit. ii. 7, 8.
‡ 1 Tim. iv. 13. ‖ Ver. 15. ** 1 Pet. iv. 7.
†† Prov. xi. 30. §§ Eph. iv. 21. ‡‡ 2 Tim. ii. 25.
‖‖ 2 Cor. iii. 6.

man that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. *

3. Take heed, that this Miniſtry be diſcharged *in a humble depending Frame.*

It is a Miniſtry *received in the* LORD; which ſignifies, not merely that it is of a Divine Appointment, for ſo is *Magiſtracy*; but the Expreſſion ſhews us, that *this Miniſtry* in a peculiar Manner *relates to the Things of the Lord.* It is wholly of a ſpiritual Nature, and relates entirely to ſpiritual Things. Now the more ſpiritual any Service is, the more unfit and incapable are we of a right Performance of it. *Temple Work* never was, never can be carried on by the Might or Power of the Creature; but only *by the Spirit of the Lord.* When with Reference hereunto *Paul* cried out with the moſt moving Pathos, *And who is ſufficient for theſe Things?* † he thereby expreſſed his deep Senſe, both of his own Weakneſs, and of the utter Inſufficiency of any other Mortal, for a Work ſo great as this of the Miniſtry. Let us then be ever afraid of an aſſuming, ſelf-confident Spirit. Let us *watch againſt Pride* upon all Occaſions, and particularly upon the Account of our Character, Gifts, Performances,

* 2 Tim. ii. 15. † 2 Cor. ii. 16.

ces, or Acceptance among the People: Acknowledging that we are altogether *unworthy* of ſo high an Honour, and of ourſelves altogether *unable* to diſcharge ſo difficult an Office. Let us ever go forth *in the Name* and Strength *of the LORD.* From Him muſt come all our Light and Knowledge: All our Furniture, all our Capacities and Opportunities, yea, all our Succeſs and Encouragement, muſt likewiſe come from Him. Let us endeavour therefore humbly to ſeek *His Preſence* with us, and fervently implore *His Bleſſing* upon us.

Herein let us imitate the renowned *Mr. Robert Bruce*, of whom we are told, * that it was his uſual Practice to be much in Prayer and Supplication in Secret, before he would venture to appear in his Work in Publick. One remarkable Inſtance whereof is recorded in the following Manner. When the Congregation had been long waiting for his Coming to preach, at length a Meſſenger was ſent for him; who found that he was in his Chamber, with his Door ſhut: But the Meſſenger over-hearing him ſeveral Times ſay, "I proteſt, I will not "go, except thou go with me;" he ſuppoſed, that ſome Perſon was with him, whom he was perſuading to go to the Worſhip. The Meſſenger therefore re-

* *Fleming*'s Fulfilling of the Scripture, pag. 197.

turned without calling, ſaying, "*Mr. Bruce* "was juſt a coming; that he only ſtaid to "bring ſome-body with him who ſeemed to "need preſſing, being unwilling to come." Preſently *Mr. Bruce* appeared, without any Man in his Company. But when he was a little entered upon his Work, the People were ſoon convinced for whom it was he waited: For *he came* in ſuch *Fulneſs of the Bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt*,* and *his Speech, and his Preaching* was in ſuch Evidence and *Demonſtration of the Spirit*, † that if not by *the Shining of his Face*, yet by that Shower of Divine Influence wherewith the Word ſpoken was attended, it was eaſy for the Congregation to perceive, that he had been *in the Mount with GOD*; § and that he had indeed *brought* that GOD, whom he had met with in Secret, (as my Author goes on) *into his Mother's Houſe, and into the Chamber of her that conceived him.* ‡

Thus, *Brother*, let it be your Care, *your Prayer*, and *mine*, that we may have ſuch manifeſt Tokens of GOD's *Preſence with us*, as ſhall be convincing to all about us, that we are *not alone* in our Work; but that we *labour* therein, *according to the Working of Chriſt*, and that *He worketh in us mightily*. ‖

4. Take

* Rom. xv. 29. † 1 Cor. ii. 4.
§ Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30. ‡ Cant. iii. 4. ‖ Col. i. 29.

4. Take heed to this Miniſtry, that you fulfil it *with a perſevering Patience, Reſolution*, and *Courage*.

Difficulties, and Oppoſition you muſt expect; and ſhould therefore ſtand prepared to meet them. It is not to be queſtioned, but that you have *ſat down and counted the Coſt*:* However, what Afflictions, what Neceſſities, Diſtreſs, or Perſecution, may ſooner or later attend the faithful Diſcharge of your Office, neither you, nor any upon Earth, can tell: But having *put your Hand to the Plow*, you are never once to have a Thought of *looking back*:† And tho' you may expect, that your Life and Service muſt be a conſtant *Warfare*, yet *as a good Soldier of Jeſus Chriſt*, § you are to *endure Hardneſs* to the End. *Fear none of the Things* that may befal you; but conſider, that whatever ſhall be your *Tribulation*, it can only continue for its *limited Seaſon*: *Be thou faithful unto Death* therefore, and the LORD, from whom you have *received this Miniſtry*, will certainly *give you a Crown of Life*; for He has promiſed it.‡

Endeavour, that your Heart may be always awed with the Conſideration of the Nature

* Luke xiv. 28. † Luke ix. 62.
§ 2 Tim. ii. 3. ‡ Rev. ii. 10.

Nature and Deſign of your Miniſtry, with the Greatneſs of the Authority from which you received it, and the Strictneſs of the Account that muſt at laſt be given. And the more you are affected and influenced by ſuch Conſiderations as theſe, the leſs will Temptations or Troubles move you: For you will then be ready to ſay with the Apoſtle, *Neither count I my Life dear unto myſelf, ſo that I may finiſh my Courſe with Joy, and the Miniſtry which I have received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the Goſpel of the Grace of GOD.** And would you not have it be the conſtant Language of your Heart, as we are perſuaded it is at this Time, "Let a merciful *Saviour* but make "me an happy Inſtrument of honouring "His Name, by *turning many unto Righte-* "*ouſneſs*; and then, whatever ſhall be the "Difficulties of Life, or the Agonies of "Death, which I may poſſibly ſuffer, yet "I can never regret a Life faithfully ſpent, "or laid down, in the holy and honoura- "ble Service of a Maſter, ſo great, ſo kind, "ſo gracious, as is MY LORD and MY "REDEEMER, *who has loved me*, and *ſo* "*loved me*, as even to *give Himſelf* a Ran- "ſom *for me*." † This leads me to the laſt Head of Advice, I have now Time to inſiſt on; *viz.*

5. Take

* Acts xx. 24. † Gal. ii. 20.

5. Take heed, that this Miniſtry be always diſcharged *from a right Principle*, and *to a right End*.

Let *Love to Chriſt*, and *Compaſſion for Souls*, animate you in all you do. Keep a ſingle Eye to your Maſter's Honour. Remember, the Part you are ſincerely to act, is that of *a Friend of the Bridegroom*. * This ſhews, that your Aim muſt be, not to *win People to yourſelf*, which would be to invade the Honour of your LORD, for whoſe Sake this Miniſtry was inſtituted, from whoſe Authority, and through whoſe Mercy, you have now received it; but to *win Souls to Chriſt*, that they may be *eſpouſed to Him*. † Let this then be your conſtant Care and Prayer, that you may be the happy Inſtrument of making up the Match between *Chriſt* and many Souls.

And as you deſire to be ſucceſsful herein, ſet forth *the Bridegroom* ſo, as that Perſons may be induced to have kind Thoughts of Him; and may be perſuaded, that He will receive and love all that are ſincerely inclined, and enabled, thro' Grace, to come unto Him. Set Him forth, in the Amiableneſs of his Perſon; in the Glory of his Wiſdom; in the Perfection of his Righteouſneſs;

* John iii. 29. † 2 Cor. xi. 2.

ouſneſs; and in the Greatneſs of his Power, as engaged, not againſt, but for his People. Speak much of *the unſearchable Riches of his Grace*, and of his infinite Tenderneſs to *the Remnant of his Heritage*. Thus you may hope to ſee, that thro' the *Spirit*'s Breathing upon Souls, they will receive kind Impreſſions, and entertain ſuch loving Thoughts of *Jeſus Chriſt*, that being ſweetly *drawn*, they will gladly *come*, humbly and chearfully ſubmitting themſelves to his Righteouſneſs, Grace, and Rule.

Ever watch againſt *By-Ends*, carnal Deſigns, and ſelfiſh Views. Let every Service be performed, *not by Conſtraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind.** Thus endeavour, by turning Souls to CHRIST, to glorify GOD in the high and ſacred Employment to which you are ſet apart. Let this be your conſtant Aim.

And that you may be the more excited hereunto, I ſhall juſt relate a Paſſage cited by *Mr. Shepherd* † from a Divine of the laſt Age, who in his *Sermon* preached before *an Aſſociation of Miniſters*, with a Deſign to quicken their Regard to the Principle, End, and Motive from which they acted, pointed them to the laſt and awful *Day of Judgment*; and having brought in CHRIST

* 1 Pet. v. 2. † In his Volume of Diſcourſes on ſeveral Subjects, pag. 305.

CHRIST the Judge, as taking his Place upon the Throne, he then, by an elegant *Prosopopœia* represented Him as calling his *Ministers* to an Account; enquiring and examining, how they had preached, and with what Views they had undertaken and discharged the Work of the Ministry.—— He called one first, and put the Question to him, "What did you preach for?" He answered, "I preached, Lord, that I "might keep a very good Living, that was "left me by my Father, of an Hundred "and fifty, or Two hundred Pounds a "Year; which, if I had not entered into "Orders, had been wholly lost, as to me "and my numerous Family." CHRIST says to Him, "Stand by; thou hast had "thy Reward."——The Question is put to another; "And what did you preach "for?" He answered, "Lord, I was ap-"plauded as a very learned Man; and I "preached to keep up the Reputation of an "eloquent Orator, and an ingenious Preach-"er." CHRIST's Answer to Him likewise was, "Stand thou by; thou also hast "had thy Reward."——The Judge puts the Question to a Third, "And what did "you preach for?" "Lord, says he, I "neither aimed at the great Things of this "World, though I was thankful for the "Conveniencies of Life which thou gavest

" me; nor did I preach that I might gain " the Character of a Wit, or a Man of " Parts, or that of a fine Scholar: But I " preached in Compaſſion to Souls, and to " pleaſe and honour Thee. My Deſign in " Preaching was, Lord, that I might win " Souls to thy bleſſed Majeſty." Upon this the Judge called out, " ROOM, Men; " ROOM, Angels: Let this Man come, " and *ſit with Me in my Throne, as I am " ſet down with my Father in his Throne:* " He has owned, and honoured Me on " Earth; and I will own and honour him " through all the Ages of Eternity."

The Reſult of all, we are told, then was, that the *Miniſters* went home much affected; reſolving, that, thro' the Help of GOD, they would mind the Work of the Miniſtry more, and look better to their Aims and Ends ever after. Would to GOD, it might be ſo this Day, as to *myſelf*, and all my honoured *Brethren in the Miniſtry* here preſent before the Lord! —— And may the aſſured Proſpect and believing Expectation, of the exact and thorough Scrutiny that will be made, and of the ſtrict Account that muſt be given, at the great Day, be ſeriouſly attended to thro' every Part of Life, and be of conſtant Service to you, *my beloved Brother*, who are now juſt entered upon this ſacred Function! Conſider, how

delightful

delightful it will be, if with reſpect to this Miniſtry, and the whole of your Conduct in it, both publick and private, you ſhall be able from the Beginning of it, and all along to the very Cloſe of your Days, to ſay in the Words of the *Apoſtle*, * that *in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of* GOD, you *have had* your *Converſation in the World, and more abundantly toward* this People, who are now become your immediate Care and Charge. Such a *Teſtimony*, from an enlightened and ſanctified *Conſcience*, will be the happy Earneſt of eternal Bliſs.

That *you* in all your future Service, both ſtated and occaſional, may be quickened, thro' the ſame rich and ſovereign *Grace*, as the *Apoſtle* was, to that holy Integrity, Diligence, and Faithfulneſs, to thoſe ſpiritual Views and heavenly Aims, which will be the juſt Matter and ſure Ground of ſuch *Rejoicing*, ſhall be our farther *Prayer* on your Behalf. And may the LORD be ever with you, to direct, uphold, and ſucceed you in this great Work; that thro' his gracious Aſſiſtance, and ſpecial Bleſſing, you may perform it ſignally to his Glory, in the daily and numerous Addition of true Believers unto this Church, and in the abundant Edification and eter-

* 2 Cor. i. 12.

nal Salvation of this His People, among whom eſpecially you are *called to labour!* May you, in all the Parts of your Miniſtry, through the rich *Anointing of the Holy One*,* be eminently furniſhed for extenſive Uſefulneſs among them; and through the good Pleaſure of the LORD be mercifully ſpared for many, many Years, to be *the Helper of their Faith and Joy!* †

And may *they*, by their unſhaken Stedfaſtneſs in the *Doctrine* and *Diſcipline* of CHRIST, by their viſible Growth and happy Increaſe in all the *Gifts* and *Graces* of the SPIRIT, and by their beautiful *Walk* and *Converſation*, every Way and juſtly renowned for its Strictneſs and Purity, for its exemplary Piety and ardent Zeal for the Redeemer's Glory, be made a remarkable *Bleſſing* and conſtant *Comfort* to you here, and your eternal *Joy and Crown of Rejoicing* § in the State and World above. And then both *you* and *they*, and *all* that by Faith are now *looking for the glorious Appearing of the great GOD, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, ‡ ſhall there join with *the general Aſſembly and Church of the FIRST-BORN* ‖ in ſinging *a new Song*; wherein, with the moſt holy Affection and

* 1 John ii. 20, 27. † 2 Cor. i. 24.
§ 1 Theſ. ii. 19. ‡ Tit. ii. 13.
‖ Heb. xii. 23.

and thankful Adoration, with the loudeſt Acclamations of the moſt triumphant Joy, and with the moſt united and melodious Voice of perfect Praiſe, ALL *the Redeemed of the Lord* ſhall aſcribe unto Him both *Power and Riches, and Wiſdom and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Bleſſing* * for ever and ever. AMEN.

* Rev. v. 12.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAG. 20. lin. 13. for *This* read *Its*. Pag. 24. lin. 26. read *for such*. P. 43. lin. 33. read *antiquâ*.

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